1973

The Canadian Career Of Vilhjalmur Stefansson

Richard J. Diubaldo

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses

Recommended Citation

https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/643

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlswadmin@uwo.ca.
THE CANADIAN CAREER OF
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

by
Richard J. Diubaldo
Department of History

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Canada
November 1972

© Richard J. Diubaldo 1972
ABSTRACT

The thesis is an analysis of an important, never thoroughly explored, side of the Canadian career of Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962), Canada's greatest modern-day explorer, pioneer Eskimo ethnologist, Arctic writer and theorist. Between 1906 and 1926, Stefansson was able to capture the imagination of Canadian politicians, businessmen, and laymen alike and impart to them a sense of their northern destiny. Yet by 1926, Stefansson had lost any government or administrative support, and left Canada, keenly disappointed.

The thesis has concentrated on this curious reversal. It has attempted, first, to outline the stages which led initially to his winning public prominence and influence in Canada and in the United States. Second, it attempts to understand the circumstances which virtually made him persona non grata in Ottawa, the seat of his former influence. This phase of the inquiry is as much an examination of Canadian politicians and bureaucrats as it is of Stefansson. It was necessary to consider carefully the actions of civil servants, mostly employees of the Geological Survey of Canada, with whom Stefansson was associated in the North in order to examine how their influence contributed to his downfall--for
they were not altogether without effect on the marked change in Stefansson's fortunes.

Central to Stefansson's initial success and later failures must be the personality of the man himself. The young Stefansson had a consuming ambition to make his mark in the world, matched with a brilliant, iconoclastic turn of mind. He had boundless faith in his ability to triumph over all resistance through the force of his reason, his intuitive faculties, and his instinctive belief that details would take care of themselves if the fundamentals were correct. He reflected the values of his generation in his turn-of-the-century American belief that life was a competing struggle, that the best competitors would survive and win—and winning was the proof of being "best". His career suggests that he tried to apply this ideology expounded by Herbert Spencer—which we now term Social Darwinism—not only to his enterprises in the Canadian North but also to his wider endeavours. While such attitudes had contributed to Stefansson's initial success between 1907 and 1913 they were also responsible for his subsequent "fall from grace", for Stefansson had overstepped himself.

His endeavours to promote interest in the Canadian North were premature in terms of the Nation's developmental priorities. Some of his objectives were faulty and misguided, and his methods at times left much to be desired. The contemporary records indicated that he was sometimes tactless in his dealings with his associates, tragically misjudging their characters and motives, while in his relations
with politicians, he was sometimes overly-optimistic and naïve.

A series of failures, some not entirely his fault, led to a serious breakdown in harmony in the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18), to the fiasco of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company, and to the disconcerting international incident over Wrangel Island, in which a reluctant Canada, became involved with Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. Stefansson's manoeuvres, and even his credibility came increasingly into question; Canadian politicians and bureaucrats became convinced he was a liability and could no longer be supported. For a time as the mistrust grew, he was treated gingerly, as someone whom it might be dangerous to offend; then even this was dropped, and a new phase began after 1926 in which he was simply ignored by official Ottawa.

Stefansson, too, came to realize that his career in Canada had ended. Thenceforth he turned his efforts to the more rewarding forums afforded in the United States and the world.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In such a short space it is exceedingly difficult to give proper due to those who helped make this study possible, for there are many to whom the author owes a considerable debt. First, the writer wishes to thank Professor Morris Zaslow, the University of Western Ontario, for his unlimited patience and excellent guidance of the work which follows. Secondly, I must thank the following individuals for making available information which was vital to the thesis: Mrs. Evelyn Stefansson Nef, of Washington, D.C., for granting me permission to use the correspondence of her late husband, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, in the Stefansson Collection; Mrs. Dorothy A. Smith of Carp, Ontario, for allowing me to use the papers of her late father, Rudolph M. Anderson; Mr. K.G. Chipman of Ottawa for permitting me to investigate his private diaries and correspondence, and who consented to a number of interviews; the late Doctor Diamond Jenness, for several interviews; and Mr. C.T.W. Hyslop for permitting me to use active files of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Thirdly, the author gratefully appreciates the wonderful assistance given to him by the following: the staff of
the Public Archives of Canada; Mrs. Erika S. Parmi, Librarian, Stefansson Collection; Miss Marion E. Brown of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Toronto Library; Mr. John Bovey, former Archivist of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and now with the Archives of Manitoba; Mrs. Robin Smith, Assistant Archivist, the American Museum of Natural History; Mrs. Katherine B. Edsall of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University; Miss Lynn S. Mullins, Assistant Librarian, American Geographic Society; Miss Nora Corley and her very competent staff at the Arctic Institute of North America Library, Montreal; Mr. George Crossette of the National Geographic Magazine; and Sergeant Sanderson of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Fourthly, the writer thanks the Ontario Government, the Canada Council, the Department of History and the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Western Ontario, the Department of History and Faculty of Arts of Sir George Williams University, for their much needed financial assistance. Finally, the author owes a great deal to Joan, patient wife, helpful critic, and typist of this manuscript, who provided the incentive to continue.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Examination</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARTS</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPS</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II - THE YOUNG STEFANSSON</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III - ARCTIC APPRENTICESHIP</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV - GOLD MINES: THE EXPEDITION TO VICTORIA LAND</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V - THE BUILDING OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VI - BREAKDOWN</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VII - THE POLITICS OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VIII - THE ARCTIC EMPIRE OF VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IX - STEFANSSON AND WRANGLER ISLAND</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER X - EXIT STEFANSSON</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER XI - CONCLUSION</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I - A Who's Who of the Canadian Arctic Expedition</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II - A List of Witnesses Who gave evidence at the hearings of the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission . 469

APPENDIX III - Success of the Alaskan Reindeer Project, 1891-1917 . . . . 472

APPENDIX IV - Recommendations of the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission . . 473

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 477

VITA . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 497
CHARTS

Chart No. 1 - The Path of Supremacy . . . . . . . . . . 283
MAPS

Map A: Stefansson's Travels and Discoveries........... page 4
Map B: Stefansson's Explorations, 1906-07............. 51
Map C: The Expedition of 1908-12 ..................... 102
Map D: Stefansson's Explorations, 1914-18........... 226
Map E: Stefansson's Arctic Mediterranean,
        Air Routes....................... 355
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On August 3, 1969, a distinctive monument\(^1\) to Vilhjalmur Stefansson was unveiled at Arnes, Manitoba, together with bilingual plaques erected by the Government of Canada. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada had recommended in October, 1964, that Stefansson be declared an "eminent Canadian", and the inscription on the plaque outlines the essentials of his contribution:

\[
\]

Stefansson cannot be considered an eminent Canadian

---

\(^1\) The sculptor was Walter Yarwood.

\(^2\) Copy of text of plaque and other details regarding the monument enclosed in letter to the author from Mr. T. B. Smythe, Assistant Head, Historical Research Section, National Historic Sites Service, 4 February 1971. Actually, the boundaries of Manitoba were extended in 1881 to include Arnes. Stefansson, strictly speaking, was born in the District of Keewatin.
alone. Probably he was one of the most widely-known personalities in the Canada of the 1920's and the world as well. His explorations won him the thanks of the Canadian government expressed in an Order-in-Council (dated 21 January 1921), and the coveted, prestigious gold medals of the American Geographical Society, the National Geographic Society, the Philadelphia Geographic Society, the Chicago Geographical Society, the Geographical Society of Paris, the Explorers Club of New York, the Geographical Society of Berlin, and the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain. In the United States, where he spent the bulk of his years, he is regarded as a folk hero to the point of his early life being made the subject of a primer intended to educate young minds and inspire right virtues in them.\(^3\) The Soviet Union, which has translated many of his works, officially recognizes the greatness of this explorer of Canada and considers him a friend of the Soviet peoples:

In his predictions and in his long, tireless propaganda as to the meaning of the North he strove to destroy the deep-rooted misconceptions about the environment and living conditions of this region. This is where he best deserves his praise. The rapid settlement, growth, economic assimilation and the increasing interest in the North, not only in our country but others as well, are all indicative of Stefansson's insight into the great future of the northern areas.\(^4\)

\(^3\)See Hortense Myers and Ruth Burnett, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Young Arctic Explorer, in Childhood of Famous Americans Series, (New York, 1966).

\(^4\)From the "Introduction" by Dr. G.A. Agranat, ed., in E.A. Ol'khina, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, (Moscow, 1970), pp. 5-7. Translated for the author by Miss Anna Boreiko, Arctic Institute of North America, Montreal, Canada.
His intimates included not only Canadian politicians, statesmen and financiers like Robert Borden, Arthur Meighen, Lord Strathcona and Sir Edmund Walker, but international figures like Theodore Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, Orville Wright, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Ernest Shackleton and Robert E. Peary—to mention only a few. In fact one could safely say that Vilhjalmur Stefansson was, and is, better known outside Canada, than he is in the country of his birth and of his breath-taking adventures and explorations—the country he hoped would develop its northern potential to make itself one of the leading nations in the world.

Although the Arctic became a subject for Canadian concern shortly before he came on the scene, it was in good measure through Stefansson's exploits, his popular writings and his extensive lecture tours in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States that the nation's interest in her northern latitudes was kindled. For almost a decade it was mainly his efforts which gave many Canadians both a romantic and a hardheaded interest in their Arctic, a relatively rare attitude in this country. He talked of using airplanes and submarines in exploring and tapping the North at a time when such mechanical contrivances were still in their infancy. It is no wonder that he has been called by some "Prophet

5 For an extensive, though by no means exhaustive, list of Stefansson's writings, see Bibliography.
The Canadian Arctic

Scale in Miles

100 0 100 200 300

Lambert Conformal Conic Projection

STEFANSSON'S TRAVELS AND DISCOVERIES MAP A

Land discovered by Stefansson
Land explored by
Other explorations by
Other routes followed

Based on the end map of Hunters of the Great North by V. Stefansson.
of the North.\textsuperscript{6}

It is somewhat strange, indeed, that the only tangible memories Canada has of this man are Stefansson Island, off the north-east corner of Victoria Island, the memorial in Manitoba, and a few scattered mentions in Canadian publications. Why should such a renowned individual have left so little mark on Canada? Why should he have been ostracized from Ottawa where, in some government quarters, his name was (and still is) akin to a dirty word? In many private circles "Windjammer" became Stefansson's nickname. Why have so many of the officials chosen to forget and, if possible, to obliterate his memory, and to challenge his achievements with unusual bitterness? A whole forty years had to elapse before the Rideau Club of Ottawa would reverse its decision to reject Stefansson's application for membership even though his original sponsor was the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden. The Club's Management Committee, in 1960, considered he had been unfairly rejected in 1921, and to make amends they made him an Honorary Member of the Club. Thus Stefansson received an honour accorded only to three other persons: the governors-general Alexander, Massey and Vanier.

Why has Stefansson received accolades from around the

\textsuperscript{6}Earl P. Hanson, Stefansson, Prophet of the North, (New York, 1941). This title also appears on his gravestone in Hanover, New Hampshire. See also D.M. Le Bourdais, Stefansson, Ambassador of the North, (Montreal, 1962), Chapter XXI, pp. 173-191.
world, yet in Canada he has received virtually no significant recognition? In part, this thesis will attempt to understand this contradiction; to find out what went wrong between Stefansson and Canada. Essentially it is an attempt to analyze the personal side of the Canadian career of this particular individual in the twenty-year period beginning in 1906, in which that career was centred. The writer hopes to determine the factors which initially led to his gaining public prominence and influence in this country and the United States, and then to evaluate the reasons and circumstances which ultimately made him persona non grata in Canada in general, and in Ottawa, the seat of his previous power, in particular.

This is a study of more than an important personal career. Stefansson accomplished more in exploring the Canadian Arctic than any other man in the past century and he made a considerable impact on the Canadian and world scene at the time. He produced many significant books and articles that made him a prominent literary figure as well. These alone make Stefansson as thesis-worthy as a second-rate, even first-rate, politician. Yet beyond these considerations his Canadian experience sheds light on larger national issues.

The high Arctic is once more topical and there is new concern about Canada's northern policies and about the operational modes of the Canadian government generally. A study in depth of the Canadian career of Vilhjalmur
Stefansson is most opportune for the perspective it may impart on the earlier histories of these problems.

Today, much attention has been focused on such aspects of northern development as the Arctic sovereignty question, developmental priorities, methods of resource utilization or the place of the native in any new northern economy. These were subjects of concern in Stefansson's time, too, and one wonders how far he influenced government policy towards northern development, particularly in the 1920's. A main concern of this thesis will be to determine just what Stefansson contributed to the formulation of Canadian public opinion and governmental policies towards the North. Did he alter or even greatly influence, governmental programmes in this area during the period immediately after World War I? When the Northwest Territories and the remoter Arctic regions began to receive attention once more, was it a reflection of Stefansson's well-known views on the question of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, or the establishment of northern industries based on the then-known resources (chiefly wildlife) of these far flung lands?.

Stefansson's Canadian career is of vital importance in Canadian history, as well, because it provides significant insights into one unusual episode in Canadian government administration and Canadian foreign policy during the period of this investigation, and, more generally, into the style and motivations of bureaucracies and politicians of the Canadian government in the years immediately following
the First World War. Stefansson was able to move freely and talk intimately with Canadian Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, important bureaucrats—the higher echelons of government—and politicians and statesmen of all stripes. His career coincides with the regimes of several Canadian Prime Ministers who, invariably, had their own approaches to northern problems. Did Borden's and Meighen's concept of the place of government in national development influence the degree of success Stefansson enjoyed in their years of power? Did Stefansson's fortunes decline because of the coming to power of Mackenzie King, whose notions about the role of government and governmental priorities may have differed with that of his predecessors? What role did the civil servants play in relation to the northern programmes of successive Prime Ministers and of Stefansson? Were Ottawa's responses to the northern challenges merely conventional reactions to contemporary political and economic philosophies and realities? The answers to such questions, by an examination of Stefansson's Canadian career, shed some light on the nature ("style") of Canadian governments of the time.

Moreover, the thesis is also a case study in the nature of the so-called frontier man. Did Stefansson's personality exhibit those features ascribed to the frontier man by Frederick Jackson Turner?

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless,
nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom--these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier.  

Was Stefansson a frontier man at all in the Turnerian sense? Certainly he lived for some years on the ultimate frontier of the Canadian Arctic. If he was such a man, how did he become one? Did it arise from his upbringing in the American mid-West or his years in Canada's northern latitudes? To what degree and in what ways was he moulded by his pioneering experiences in the Canadian North? Or did his activities in the North serve merely to confirm attitudes and assumptions already held before he investigated Canada's northern reaches? This question of the force of the environment on the personality of the individual is of considerable importance in historical study.

The study of so remarkable an individual as Stefansson is of value in throwing some light on another even more historical problem--the role of the individual in the shaping of history. The interplay between Stefansson the man and his Canadian surroundings is also a study in personality and in the dynamics of personal relationships.

---

Hence it is important to understand the developing personality of Stefansson that affected so many widely varied people.

This concern with the man, Stefansson, and his relationships with his contemporaries does not mean that the thesis aims to offer yet another biographical or geographical study of Stefansson's activities. These have been the main subject of his own writings and those of his biographers. Instead it will try to look through and beyond Stefansson to examine the impact of the man and his ideas on the Canadian scene. Very little space has been devoted to the events of his various expeditions, except insofar as such information is needed to clarify Stefansson's impact on his associates, partisan or otherwise, and the times. The reader, however, should not gain the impression that Stefansson's explorations are underplayed because these feats were negligible. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The assessment of Stefansson's role in these several connections requires that his career be examined in an intensive, detailed fashion, sometimes a day-by-day account, and sometimes of seemingly petty and trivial events. Even gossip and rumour sometimes have their place in the interplay of personalities with which this thesis is largely concerned. In human behaviour, it is not always what was true that mattered but what the participants believed to be true—and this was never more the case than in the controversial, emotion-charged Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18.
It is appropriate to investigate the interplay of forces of all magnitudes that affect and mould the actions of a great man. Stefansson's Canadian career involved an interaction at two levels: between individuals, Robert Borden and Rudolph Martin Anderson; and among groups, Stefansson's partisans and opponents in the Arctic and within the federal government. This area is one in which the psychiatrist and group sociologist is better qualified. Nevertheless, the search for answers to the historical problems surrounding Stefansson's Canadian career, demands that the student should venture into these realms.

The availability of important new sources on this subject makes it possible to re-examine the earlier evaluations of Stefansson's impact on Canada from a different perspective, once freed of some of the emotions of the past. True, traces of bitter recollections still linger, and the subject still arouses controversy. To his admirers Stefansson remains a dedicated scientist and idealist; to his detractors, a not-too-scrupulous adventurer who sometimes used cheap publicity tricks to advance himself and dupe the Canadian government and people. Bureaucracies, as well as individuals, have long memories and not even the passage of time has completely erased the debate about the role and the personality of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Still, most of the active participants in the controversies of fifty years ago have left the scene,
and one may hope that the intense passions are quietly dissipating.

To help the reader arrive at the "truth" about the man and his career, a host of published accounts exist, particularly Stefansson's own voluminous writings. Most of the lasting works that deal with Stefansson came from the pens of admirers, who portray him as a great-souled superman, whose activities are above criticism. All, in one fashion or another, have drawn heavily on Stefansson's own accounts of his exploits or have used D.M. Le Bourdais' study, written in 1930 but not published until shortly after Stefansson's death in 1962. That study—Stefansson, Ambassador of the North—is possibly the best, most balanced biography to date, but even it must be considered a "court" history for the simple reason that Le Bourdais was a long-time friend and travelling companion of Stefansson during the 1920's. It soon becomes evident, upon reading his account, that, although Le Bourdais used some archival material, he shared Stefansson's perspectives. Furthermore, Stefansson's own final work, his autobiography, Discovery, which appeared two years after his death, is a conscientious work of considerable merit. Compared with some of his earlier, more excitable writings dealing with his Canadian career, Discovery is relatively free of the exaggerations and the smugness that detracted from those earlier works. Nevertheless, as with most autobiographies—especially when written at a distance of over 40 years removed from the events—his assertions do not always square with the contemporary records.
Till now very little effort has been made to use the contemporary evidence and manuscripts which are available. Now papers are becoming open for study that bear on Stefansson, his circle of friends, his enemies; the papers of the relevant government agencies, in particular, are now available in quantity. It has become possible to evaluate some of the discrepancies which appear in the accounts of Stefansson, of his friends and of their opponents. This is perhaps the first attempt, making wide use of archival sources, to examine the Canadian career of Vilhjalmur Stefansson in its full perspective, as objectively as possible.

An embarrassment of documentary riches bewildered and almost overwhelmed the author at times, especially when he visited the Stefansson manuscripts housed in the Stefansson Collection, Dartmouth College. Extensive use was made of this rather formidable and, needless to say, excellent archival source. As important for the Canadian side, very often including the duplicates of correspondence to and from Stefansson, are the files of the old Department of the Naval Service, the Geological Survey of Canada, the papers of Sir Robert Borden, Arthur Meighen and William Lyon Mackenzie King. These official or semi-official records, housed in the Public Archives of Canada, may be used without restrictions. A number of other important collections, including the Stefansson Collection mentioned above, do have some restrictions as to access and quotation, but were nevertheless made available for the purposes of this thesis. So too were
the papers of Rudolph M. Anderson, the J.B. Harkin Papers, the Governor-General's Files, in the Public Archives of Canada; also files still with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (formerly Northern Affairs and National Resources), and of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A number of Canadian materials still are not available for study, namely the papers of the late Dr. Diamond Jenness, and of Mr. Kenneth G. Chipman, both of whom played important roles in the events of the period. However, the writer was privileged to interview both men, who warmly granted him a number of interviews, while Mr. Chipman, in addition, allowed me to examine and make notes from his private diaries and other materials.

To round out the study it was necessary to use some auxiliary archival collections not found in Ottawa. These included the Mavor Collection and the Walker Collection at the University of Toronto; the archives of Harvard's Peabody Museum, and the Papers of Theodore Roosevelt in Cambridge, Massachusetts; the very important collection at the American Geographical Society and the American Museum of Natural History, both in New York City; and the archives of the National Geographic Society, and American State Papers in the National Archives in Washington.

While most of the above-mentioned research materials are available and readily accessible, preparing comprehensive accounts from such a multiplicity of scattered sources presented difficulties. Nevertheless, the diversity of such
sources facilitated the checking of certain assertions and the evaluation of motives. Their variety makes it possible to secure a truer insight into the essential Stefansson, and to throw new light on the important period in the history of the Canadian North with which he was so intimately associated.

* * *

In Canada by 1905-06, unbeknown to Stefansson who was not particularly moved by things northern at this time, the stage was being set for his participation. The creation of two new provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, carved from a portion of the North-West Territories, brought a revival of interest in Canada's frontier. Just as important in focusing more and more attention on the remoter regions of the young Dominion were other developments in the previous decade. The finding of gold in the Yukon generated a fever which transcended the boundaries of Canada; the stories of the riches to be found in the streams of the Klondike had an electrifying effect. Never before had so much international attention been directed at this country and the possible mineral riches she possessed. The exploitation of the gold fields helped unleash the Laurier Boom, but it also brought questions concerning the future of such areas, especially their administration and their status. The gold finds also had larger ramifications. In the field of international relations,
the method of the final settlement of the Alaska boundary in 1903 with the United States shook Canadian complacency. It was no longer considered politic, nor in the national interest, to have Canadian matters settled by policies emanating from London, which seemed to ignore Canadian sensibilities in favour of global considerations.

The Alaska boundary settlement also accentuated a lingering uneasiness over the stability of some of Canada's other ill-defined boundaries and of her sovereignty in those northern territories, particularly the future of the Arctic Archipelago, lying north of the Canadian mainland.  

---


Over the next two decades Stefansson was to be intimately involved with such problems. The Dominion's anxiety over its legal position in the Archipelago stemmed directly from a confidential report, submitted in 1905, by W.F. King, Chief Astronomer of Canada, which concluded that "Canada's title to some at least of the northern islands is imperfect."\(^{10}\)

In 1870 full title to Rupert's Land the Northwestern Territory was transferred from Britain to Canada, yet no exact definition of the limits of these was given, nor of the Arctic islands either. In 1880, by an Imperial Order-in-Council, the boundaries of Canada were extended to cover all British territories and islands in the far north of North America. But even the order of 1880 did not specifically describe the territory transferred to Canada, and, to complicate matters further, Canada did not formally acknowledge the transfer. Not until 1895, fifteen years later, did the Canadian government issue an Order-in-Council which had the effect of notifying other states that all territory between 141\(^{0}\) West Longitude and a vague line running west of Greenland was under the jurisdiction of the Dominion. Three new districts were created—Mackenzie, Yukon, and Franklin—the last being assigned the area in question. A later amending Order-in-Council of 1897 which made the boundaries of the territories much more explicit, had further stated that the

\(^{10}\) King, p. 8.
District of Franklin included all lands and islands between the 141st meridian on the west, and on the east, Davis Strait, Baffin Bay, Smith Sound, Kennedy Channel and Rødeoson Channel. That pronouncement also specifically named the chief islands then known to exist within those limits, extending as far north as Ellesmere. Yet, according to King, Canada's assumption of authority in 1895 might not have full international force.11 King took his argument a step further: "Canada's title to the northern islands derived from Great Britain's--Great Britain's title rests upon acts of discovery and possession. These acts were never, prior to the transfer to Canada, ratified by State authority, or confirmed by exercise of jurisdiction..."12

King's report had been made in response to a number of developments. The Alaska Boundary dispute had shown the extent to which the United States posed a threat to Canadian territorial pretensions in the Arctic, for Americans had been active in the north, in one way or another, since the middle of the nineteenth century. The majority of these American expeditions to the northlands were privately sponsored, but they frequently built cairns, deposited written records, and raised their country's flag at the places they visited, though there were apparently few definite territorial claims, i.e., by the United States Government.13 Nevertheless, the

---

11Ibid.
12Ibid.
13Ibid., pp. 26-34.
Americans might argue that their nationals had been far more active than the Dominion's subjects in the north. Added to this was the regular presence of American whalers operating and wintering in and around Herschel Island and Hudson Bay whose attitudes might threaten Canadian sovereignty. The alleged misdeeds of whaling crews, and the desire to collect customs duties, sell licenses, and otherwise regulate fishing and whaling, were key factors in the initiation of investigation and patrol voyages by Canada in the 1880's in Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay, and afterwards in the Arctic Islands.\textsuperscript{14} It was the reported lawlessness at the winter headquarters of the American whaling fleet in the Beaufort Sea (in 1896)-that caused the North-West Mounted Police in 1903 to descend upon the Western Arctic and establish a post at Herschel Island and another police operation on Hudson Bay.\textsuperscript{15} Ironically, these successful attempts to bring

\textsuperscript{14} For example, see the following accounts of the various voyages: Canada, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Report of the Hudson's Bay Expedition of 1884 under the Command of A.R. Gordon, R.N. (1884); Canada, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Report of the Expedition to Hudson's Bay and Cumberland Sound in the Steamship Diana under the Command of William Wakeham in the year 1897, (1898); A.P. Low, The Cruise of the Neptune, 1903-04 (Ottawa, 1906); Canada, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Report on the Dominion Government Expedition to the Arctic Islands and Hudson Strait on Board the D.G.S. Arctic, 1906-07, by Captain J.E. Bernier, Officer in Charge and Fisheries Officer, (Ottawa, 1909); Canada Department of Marine and Fisheries, Report on the Dominion of Canada Expedition to the Arctic Islands and Hudson Strait on Board the D.G.S. Arctic (1908-09) (Ottawa, 1910); Canada, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Report on the Dominion Government Expedition to the Northern Waters and Arctic Archipelago of the D.G.S. Arctic in 1910 under the Command of J.E. Bernier (Ottawa, 1911 [?]).

\textsuperscript{15} Canada, North-West Mounted Police, Annual Report, 1903-04.
the Arctic whaling industry under Canadian government control and demonstrate that the Dominion possessed effective administration in these areas, coincided with the declining economic importance of the industry. 16

The most direct threat to Canadian control of the entire archipelago at the turn of the century came from Norway which, as a result of Otto Sverdrup's discoveries between 1898 and 1902, could have claimed Axel Heiberg and the Ringnes Islands (later to be known as the Sverdrup Islands), on a basis of prior discovery. 17 King's report served to reinforce Ottawa's suspicions: Canada was in danger of losing complete and unquestioned control of some of the Arctic territories unless she could demonstrate that she could exercise effective occupation.

Some Canadians were patently alarmist. Captain Joseph Bernier (1852-1934) had been urging the Canadian government for a number of years to remedy the situation and make secure Canada's claim to the Archipelago. From 1897 Canadian expeditions had been touching on Arctic islands

16 See tonnage tables in A.P. Low, pp. 277-78.

17 Actually, since Norway was under the Swedish Crown until 1905, Sverdrup claimed the islands in the name of King Oscar II of Sweden; however, no official action was taken--even when he petitioned the newly formed government of Norway. Zaslow, p. 260. In 1930 these claims were abandoned in a bizarre arrangement whereby Sverdrup finally sold his diaries to the Canadian government in recognition of the Dominion's authority. Plischke, p. 44. "Canada had some difficulty in wording the announcement of the payment and the acquisition of the Sverdrup diaries in a way that it would not reveal any doubt about Canada's claim." R.A.J. Phillips, Canada's North (Toronto, 1967), p. 107.
and making a point of raising the flag. Between the years 1906 and 1913—which cover the years of Stefansson's first two northern expeditions—Bernier, as a fishery officer and agent of the Canadian government in other capacities, carried out his government's instructions to demonstrate that Canada had the wherewithall and the interest to care for her northern territories.\(^\text{18}\)

By the turn of the century then, the Canadian government had embarked on a long range, though relatively low key, programme of finding out more about her northern territories, securing Canadian sovereignty, and advancing the frontiers of scientific knowledge. Stefansson was soon destined to become one of the central characters, at times the dominant personality, in bringing about a greatly accelerated Canadian effort.

\(^{18}\) J.E. Bernier, Master Mariner and Arctic Explorer: a narrative of sixty years at sea from the logs and yarns of Captain J.E. Bernier (Ottawa, 1939); pp. 306-07.
CHAPTER II
THE YOUNG STEFANSSON

When Vilhjalmur Stefansson appeared on the scene in 1904-05, he was a mature man of twenty-five, with pre-formed attitudes and ideas, with a demonstrable drive and talent for success. His recently-completed college career revealed the sort of man he was to become: iconoclastic, aggressive, opportunistic, outwardly self-confident, and a believer in Spencer's brand of Social Darwinism—a man of action who would unceasingly devote himself to hard tasks to achieve the recognition and fame he consciously sought. This, he believed, would bring him self-fulfillment in a world overly dependent on misguided tradition. The educational experience he would receive at the universities of North Dakota, Iowa, and, finally, Harvard effectively reinforced his experiences on the Dakota frontier. With such a strong drive for personal distinction, Stefansson could not help but succeed; yet in certain aspects of the above-mentioned traits one may detect the seeds of his future difficulties in his relationships with the Canadians.
In 1880, a year after Vilhjalmur Stefansson was born, his parents left, what is now Manitoba, for the prairie settlements of the Dakota Territory. His Icelandic parents had moved from their island to the "Promised Land" in 1875, but they were to find that, at this particular point in the Canadian West's early history, the land held little promise. The Stephensons, as they became known, were soon confronted with the bitter Manitoba winters, crop failure, floods, an epidemic, and the spectre of starvation. Like many disenchanted Icelanders before them, the family pulled up stakes and trekked southward to the Dakotas. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, then, spent most of his boyhood in the frontier wilderness of the North American plains. Whether this experience was to be a factor in Stefansson's individualistic, self-reliant, and rugged make-up is a moot point, yet during his later Arctic exploits and adventures he made grateful references to his pioneer and cowboy life. A singular factor that did play a paramount role in shaping Stefansson's character, however,

---


2Stefansson's father quickly adopted a Scottish name, a vogue among Icelanders in the new communities. Stefansson, Discovery, p. 6.

3For a description of the early years of uncertainty in the fledgling Icelandic communities in Manitoba see W. Kristjanson, The Icelandic People in Manitoba, (Winnipeg, 1965), pp. 29-129.
was the Icelandic intellectual tradition transplanted to the Dakota prairies—tolerance, inquisitiveness, skepticism, mysteriously combined with romanticism, a vaunted literary ability, and a profound respect for education.

Actually it was the years he spent at the University of North Dakota, the University of Iowa, and finally Harvard, that were to develop and reveal most of Stefansson's personal traits. That a lad from such an economically underprivileged environment should have received a "one in a million" educational opportunity is itself a commentary on his innate ability, ambition, and zeal—as well as a true American success story. Although Stefansson afterwards saw his college career in a very rosy light, that period of his life offered more than its usual share of disillusionment and soul-searching as well as financial uncertainty. Stefansson was constantly having to make ends meet, from instructing with the International Correspondence Schools, to selling insurance for the Independent Order of Foresters, to speculating in Canadian land. The colourless academic routine seemed alien and meaningless to a young, highly egotistical, brilliant individual who had long known his own abilities, and all of whose visions were underscored by the idea of personal

4 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 12.

5 Ibid., pp. 25-47.

6 Dartmouth College, Stefansson Collection, [hereafter cited as SC], International Correspondence Schools—1902 file; Vilhjalmur Stefansson [hereafter cited as VS] to A.J. Hatfield, 15 June 1902. SC, 1897-1903 file, VS. to A.C. McLane, 19 September, 1902.
greatness. He was impatient with things as they were, and his impatience continually boiled up in outbursts of irreverence and iconoclasm—sometimes, one suspects, for effect more than substance. In curiously modern tones he scoffed at the type of formal learning to which he was being subjected. As an educational process it was stagnant and useless:

I believe that a person who is in real earnest can spend his time more profitably at home, with some good books at his command than he can at school. Here one has a certain number of lessons to get, some rules to learn, and not a few old fogy ideas to hammer into his head. I believe that a school course pounds all originality (or most of it) out of its victims. "There is no other way but my way" is the motto of half our teachers. What kind of men will these moulders-of-character turn over to the world? Old fogy who will in their turn say "there is no other way but my way" and who will, like a toy locomotive on a round track, puff majestically around their little close-curved track and fondly imagine that they are steaming on the road to progress.8

This presumably referred to the University of North Dakota—and perhaps reflects the level of that institution at that time; certainly, he continually sought an education, and he later found Harvard much more to his liking. And, after all, was he not himself by his own career the best proof of the success of the turn-of-the-century American university system? Stefansson's belief in a relatively unstructured education

7 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 32.

8 SC, 1899-1904 file, CA. fall or early winter of 1898. VS to Mrs. Sara Brinjolfson [his former sweetheart]. Sometimes, as it will become obvious later, Stefansson took shortcuts with his words, but the quotations, as they appear in this work, are as he wrote them.
was only one early example of his lifelong adherence to, and promotion of, the so-called "school of unlearning". His mind, like his muscles, would grow weak without hard exercise, he felt, for "nothing strengthened the mind as a fixed purpose... fix your eyes on a mark—a high mark—and never look back for that is death... So only can the world be conquered." 9 Lofty as some of his ideals were, these sentiments did not endear him to many people. On more than one occasion, precisely because of his efforts to be different, original and stimulating, he was to find himself alone.

To assert himself "Willy" resumed the old family name of "Vilhjalmur Stefansson" early in 1899—"thoroughly Icelandic" 10 and to whet his appetite for more knowledge he and his companions spent many an evening discussing such "evils" as Robert G. Ingersoll, the American agnostic who attacked religion on "rational" grounds, and Charles Darwin, whose _Origin of the Species_, postulating evolution and natural selection, was upsetting the complacency of the last half of the nineteenth century, especially in fundamentalist Mid-America. On one occasion, for holding forth too vehemently on such ideas, Stefansson was to lose his room and board. He, like many later young people, soon found that the key to popularity amongst his peers was to excel in things

---

9 ibid.

10 SC, 1899 file. VS to Mrs. S. Bjorfsen, 5 February 1899.
academic while "playing lazy", pretending not to do a stitch of studying while spending his time at compelling extra-curricular work. In public he was a loafer, seldom attending his classes at North Dakota; secretly, he was an intense, hard-working student.\textsuperscript{11} Such behaviour, along with a light-hearted disdain for all forms of authority, was to spell trouble.

His troubles with the University of North Dakota administration are a key to understanding the young Stefansson at this stage of his career. Looking back on Stefansson's expulsion from North Dakota—ostensibly on the grounds of poor attendance and "failure to attend to his duties"\textsuperscript{12} Vernon P. Squires, his former professor in the Department of Literature, concluded that Stefansson "had settled the problem of life a little too decisively and dogmatically" for one of his age and experience. Squires was certain that Stefansson had a bright future if he could only learn to be a little less egotistical and cocksure.\textsuperscript{13}

Stefansson's rather disdainful attitude prompted William Merrifield, President of the University of North Dakota, to spell out the Establishment's position to the youthful skeptic. Rightly or wrongly, Merrifield had viewed

\textsuperscript{11} Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{12} Quoted in Le Bourdais, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{13} SC, 1903-17 file, V.P. Squires to VS., 5 February 1903.
Stefansson an insubordinating influence; not only had Stefansson set authority at defiance, but he had incited others to do the same. Merrifield was willing to forgive and forget if the young turk would acquiesce and "be able to live as a loyal member of the community in which your lot may be cast." If he could not do so, the university would rather give up the relationship. "...[N]o community can, or will, long tolerate a spirit of insubordination or defiance to its members. That spirit, of course, is anarchy, and everybody understands these days what anarchy is."14

Obviously Stefansson did not comply with Merrifield's conditions, for he soon moved on to the more congenial, less formalized, State University of Iowa, where he finally convinced the university authorities of his sincerity and speedily completed his undergraduate education, then moved on to Harvard, probably the finest school in the country. True, he had had to submit to going as a divinity student, on scholarship—but at least Stefansson was there, in Harvard. At Harvard, aside from the nagging financial worries, Stefansson felt quite at home, among intellectual equals and certainly more challenging teachers. Almost everyone who came in contact with Stefansson, Merrifield included, realized he had excellent ability. Stefansson, above all,

14 SC, 1897-1903 file. W. Merrifield to VS, 21 September 1901. It should be noted that President McKinlay had just been murdered by an Anarchist in Buffalo, New York.
was fully aware of his own capabilities, that he was made of the "right stuff" to succeed, and to succeed greatly. A determination to be successful, of course, was the ethic and drive of the time. While at Harvard he wrote a short article, originally called "Working Your Way Through Harvard", which, like many a beginner writer's efforts, was autobiographical, reflected his own experience and assumptions about himself. Harvard, he pointed out, was not only terribly expensive, it was intellectually demanding--almost impossible--for the average, the mediocre: "[Harvard] is the place for the poor man who knows he is made of the right stuff, who has found by experience that he has more inferiors than superiors in ability and courage." 15

Aside from this self-confidence, Stefansson had, really, little to cling to in his early years. He entered college in 1898, a broken-hearted lover, the girl he had loved had married someone else. 16 After this experience, Stefansson rarely concerned himself with women, except to give poetic notice to some short-lived flirtation or other. 17 More and


16 SC, 1899-1904 file. VS to Mrs. Bjornfson, 3 October 1898.

17 For example see the following poems by Stefansson: SC, 1897-1903 file. "To Helen", "To Cicilia"; also "To Mabel", and "Love Sonnets of a College Man", no location.
more of his time was taken up with the academic life at Harvard, currently one of the primary bailiwicks of Spencerian "Social Darwinism" in American thought.\textsuperscript{18} Although by this time in its twilight and losing ground before the new dissenting "social gospel", Herbert Spencer's application of Darwinian concepts to all facets of existence was being forcefully echoed in Harvard Yard.\textsuperscript{19} Stefansson had encountered Spencer's \textit{First Principles of Synthetic Philosophy} as a sophomore at Iowa, and had drawn from it "a comprehensive philosophical grasp of the universe."\textsuperscript{20} Harvard was to reinforce this experience, and the view of the universe that resulted was to be one of Stefansson's major credos.

Spencer applied evolutionary Darwinism systematically—if not always soundly—to mankind and his world. Along with the conception that all sound development must be slow and unhurried, Spencer stressed that the history of man's development depended on the persistence of force and natural evolution through the "struggle for existence" and the "survival of the fittest." Nature would ensure that the best competitors would win—and winning was the proof of being "best". The confusing of physically fit with morally

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 13-50.
\textsuperscript{20} SC, Random, Untitled file. VS memo, n.d., Canadian Arctic Expedition [hereafter cited as CAE].
\end{flushright}
"best" can be seen in Spencer's extolling of such virtues as frugality and foresight, careful management, hard work and profound self-sufficiency. Stefansson, looking to his own boyhood experiences, believed he possessed all of these virtues.

Stefansson preferred to study Spencer, Darwin, and Hugo rather than mundane subjects like geometry or political economy. To him, Spencer's formula of evolution was a master-piece, "a skeleton to the secrets of the universe; a 'blank form' for a universe." It had depth, breadth, and, above all, "omnicomprehensibility". Kepler may have been the legislator of the stars, but "Spencer is the law giver and interpreter of the universe."21

Stefansson adopted a Spencerian approach to all his efforts, Arctic or otherwise. His diary for 1904 records his reflections on the human attributes which contribute to human progress: "Remembrance, Industry, Adaptability, Inventiveness, Receptiveness, Forethought." Remembrance and the treasuring of experiences was the first condition for human advancement. As for Industry: "The secret of improvement is [the] effort to improve; actively strengthen all bodily and mental powers. Environment must be subjected." Inventiveness, to Stefansson, was self-explanatory. The fundamental attribute of all organisms, including man, was Adaptability to the environment. Besides, individuals must

21Sc, 1897-1903 file. VS to A.E. Morrison, 28 August 1899.
be Receptive, must be willing to learn, "to borrow from each other—and so must tribes and nations. Here the value of travel and comparative studies." The final attribute of human progress was Forethought, "the ripe fruit of intellectual development, man's ability to plan ahead, to have faith in the future, perhaps the chief difference between savage and civilized man."\(^{22}\)

Stefansson entered Harvard Yard on a divinity scholarship of the American Unitarian Association. If anything, as Stefansson admitted, he undertook Divinity Studies to enable himself to be ingeniously transferred to another faculty, Anthropology, without having the requisite background.\(^{23}\) In later years, his detractors would suggest by rumour and innuendo, that in this Stefansson displayed an opportunism which would become his trademark.\(^{24}\) As early as 1899 Stefansson had indicated a strong preference for "the sciences that have a direct bearing upon the phenomena of life and society."\(^{25}\) It is true that he did have a

\(^{22}\)SC, Stefansson Diary, n.d., 1904.

\(^{23}\)Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 32-47.

\(^{24}\)Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa [hereafter PAC], Papers of Mrs. J.T. Crawford, Manuscript Group 30/C49 [hereafter Crawford Papers], Mrs. Rudolph Anderson to Mrs. Crawford, 21 March 1924. According to Mrs. Anderson who, along with her husband, Rudolph, became active opponents of Stefansson, "[i]t was not religion that attracted him to Harvard Divinity School, but the fact that scholarships there were easy to obtain...He took the scholarships until something better should turn up." Ibid.

\(^{25}\)SC, Thorvaldson-1899 file. VS. to T. Thorvaldson, 2 October 1899.
semi-religious concern, for at the very outset of his Harvard career, he was able, much to his surprise, to convince both the University and the Unitarians, that religion was folklore, hence a branch of anthropology. Initially, Stefansson was destined to become a Unitarian minister, but eventually the Divinity School and the American Unitarian Association became convinced he was not suited to this career, and Stefansson was free to approach the Graduate School of Anthropology to continue his studies there. The Department of Anthropology had been impressed by Stefansson's ability and the intellectual prowess he had displayed in one of their undergraduate courses; it awarded him a fellowship in anthropology.\textsuperscript{26}

The life of a man of the cloth—if a Unitarian minister may be so described—had never really been his goal, since for a long time he had had little use for organized religion. Life and society, as he saw them, had turned Stefansson into a singular pessimist about the future of man and of uncertainty about his own place in the scheme of things. He may have been self-confident about his abilities, but he seriously doubted that any talent had a purpose or value. His first great awakening came with his alienation from organized religion. Religion in all its manifestations was a worthless pursuit to occupy one's mind. In 1898 Stefansson attended a Unitarian convention in Boston as a

\textsuperscript{26}Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, pp. 32-47.
representative of the Icelandic Unitarian Association. He came away completely disillusioned because of the petty doctrinal squabbles which abounded at the congress, and could not but agree with the observations of A.E. Morrison, his friend and advisor, that "any assembly of theologians is the best example we have of insanity reduced to a science, a systematic fraud, unconscious crime, of that system which wastes the life of man and shrivels up his soul." Everything in nature denied the existence of a personal god, and "yet this does not break on clouded minds, chained like slaves to tread the mills of toil, to make brick without straw."  

Stefansson, in a reply which would become characteristic, expressed distress that the world was full of sheep who believed what they were told or read, who refused to explore beyond the dogmas that were so intimately bound up in their world view. He was convinced he had a special mission to remove the beam from humanity's eye, to let the world know, as loudly as possible, that the false assumptions it fancied were not eternal truths. Stefansson approached life, as a teacher, a missionary for the causes of science and reason.

Here was a theme he often returned to in his poems of these years. He saw himself in an unending search for

---

27SC, 1897-1903 file. A.E. Morrison to VS, 7 July 1899.

28VS to Thorvaldson, 2 October 1899.
the holy grail. Truth, as one of a host of men in quest for
the same goal. He would do his small part to challenge
convention, even if it meant martyrdom:

Even though our arms be puny it rolls the stone away
From the tomb where truth lies buried
Oft upon this foreman's ramparts streams the bravest
leader's blood
But it clears the way for others, and where then the
hero stood
Stands an army of his comrades, brave to do and brave
to die,
And the thousand-voice death-knell of the tyrant rends
the sky.

Truth would out, and perhaps the surest way to bring about
the "Dawn" of truth was through science.  

But this ambition still did not solve his recurring
doubts of his personal worth or the problems of his place
in the scheme of things. A profoundly sensitive youth, he
was given at times to pessimism about his fate, to feeling
that his life—short as it was—was a tragedy, that he was
ruined, his dreams gone awry:  

But if the prize of a woman's love
Falls not to me or you,
Let us hide the blight of a ruined life
In a work that is strong and true,
For those who have buried earth's
fairest shrines,

---

29 SC, uncatalogued. Fragments of an untitled and
unpublished poem by Stefansson.

30 SC, Miscellaneous-1903 file. See poem entitled
"Science".

31 SC, Miscellaneous-1903 file. See poem "A Dream
when Dreams are Vanished".
And have wrought, since the world began,
Are those denied a woman's love
And the life of a common man.32

In reading Stefansson's poems—many unpublished—one wonders how far they reflect his true feeling and how far they were merely "poetic license", or simply reflections of "growing up pains". One gets the distinct feeling from the poems however, that Stefansson would never be satisfied with the life of a common man and all its trappings. The brooding, over-romanticized self-pity and pessimism had to find some release, some sanctuary, from the confusing hustle and bustle of a dehumanized brutal world:

I have an asylum, and thither I flee,
For my cottage stands waiting in the dreamland for me.
Exile the friends and my loved ones at home
Exile the friends I left far behind me
And a stranger I am in a land they assign me
But my spirit still dwells with the loved ones at home,

In my dreams I am with them, wherever I roam.33

What was his asylum to be? Where was he to go? At first it is easy to suggest that his asylum was to be the loneliness and barren grounds of northern Canada, that the Arctic was to soothe his troubled being. This is only partly true. His asylum, really was to devote himself completely to work, to drown himself utterly in hard tasks—whether in the Arctic or anywhere else.

32SC, Miscellaneous-1903 file. See poem "Philosophy at Twenty".

Years later, in 1912, while on his return south from his second expedition, an older (age 32) and wiser Stefansson confided to his diary that he still had failed to find happiness and truth from his work. One May evening Stefansson sat down and summed up his hapless plight:

One reason for keeping one's emotions out of his journal is that anyone with imagination can guess what they are. They need only set before them a dreamer thrown among the hardest realities of our earth, one who longs for sympathy placed among people not unsympathetic but as incapable of seeing the things that he sees as we are of seeing ultra violet light....To my unfortunate mind nothing seems worthwhile--no success as seen by others, no success tho I myself should have to admit it complete in every other respect would be to me worthwhile. I cannot picture for myself a heaven and no one has pictured a heaven for me, that holds out the promise: "This will satisfy you." One heaven may be better than another and all may be better than hell, but none can satisfy. The best thing I can hope for is work. Work will drown sorrow better than any other thing I have tried--as yet I have not tried drink, and I shall probably never try it, for others have tested it and found its promises unfulfilled. The best to see hoped for is congenial work, and the work appears congenial after a fashion--I can think of nothing better and I am fit for nothing else by now....My desire is to be able to keep abreast with my time. That they are flying now and could not when I left home is symbolical of what has probably happened to me generally--I am being left behind in the dark ages of my own creating. To be narrow in knowledge is bad; to be narrowed in sympathies is only worse. Looking over such magazines as I have seen on my way west the last two months, I have found few things in them that interest me. "So some of him lived but most of him died" seems to be my case.

Apparently, his view of his place in the world had not been

34 SC, Stefansson Diary, 28 May 1912.
changed much by his first five years in the Canadian North. Despite his cocksure attitude in public, Stefansson's introspective, personal writing reveals him as a sensitive man, given to moods of despair even when things did go to his satisfaction. One can imagine how he must have suffered from some of his later setbacks, how he summoned up the strength from within to pull himself together to plunge ahead with his work. Constant and intense activity was not only his brand of personal therapy, but also a balm for failure—either real or imagined.

This glance into the "essential Stefansson", albeit brief and incomplete, is requisite to understanding the qualities of the man who was soon to play a vital role in the history of northern Canada. He had had a chequered, and in some ways incomplete, university career, he was an aggressive, opportunistic individual. Outwardly a man who displayed a high degree of self-confidence and faith in his own star, he was occasionally plagued by self-doubts and feelings of insecurity that he kept strictly to himself. A man of action, Stefansson threw himself into demanding tasks, sure that hard work would aid his drive for personal success and greatness. And, as his Canadian career suggests, one of the fundamental forces in his make-up would be an application of Spencerian principles to many of his endeavours.
The will to survive, despite the odds, to overcome obstacles, to be the master of the situation rather than the reverse, and to ultimately win "the game",\textsuperscript{35} was a salient feature of Stefansson's drive for recognition and self-fulfillment. His first periods in the North were to reveal these qualities.

\textsuperscript{35}See p. 132,
CHAPTER III
ARCTIC INITIATION

Initially, the young Stefansson's interest in the higher latitudes was directed solely at his Icelandic heritage. A short visit to his parent's homeland during the summer of 1904 paved the way for a minor anthropological expedition there the next year. This, in turn, was to give Stefansson invaluable lessons and insights and to launch him on his Canadian career. Such a career seemed highly improbable in 1906; yet within a year Stefansson received a taste of his future work and its locale, acquainting him with the Canadian Arctic, the Eskimo natives, and influential Canadian figures. Moreover, this first Arctic sojourn would reveal his talents, not only as an explorer and a participant in expedition planning but also as author and Arctic thinker.

Divinity pursuits had been foresaken for a more promising and rewarding career in anthropology, a relatively new science; a bright individual of Stefansson's stamp, on the ground floor of its development, was almost certain of
a place in the sun.

Stefansson suggested to Frederick Ward Putnam, head of Harvard's Department of Anthropology, that he make a trip to Iceland. Putnam was at first skeptical, but since the young graduate student was able to read the principal source languages, Icelandic and Latin, and because Putnam became interested in Stefansson's hypothesis of a possible correlation between tooth decay and the use of cereals in one's diet, funds were made available for a short trip in 1903. The six or seven weeks in Reykjavik proved to be interesting, though not conclusive in proving out the tooth decay theory. The following summer, under the auspices, this time, of Thomas Augustus Jaggar, "vulcanologist", funds were secured for a second trip to Iceland to study the Island's volcanic activity. Stefansson was to have been Jagger's interpreter on this expedition, but at the last moment Jaggar went off to study Hawaii's natural wonders, virtually leaving Stefansson to his own devices. While both trips, produced few immediate results both were a convenient method of combining business with pleasure.

1 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 48.

Much later, when Stefansson had had more Arctic experience under his belt and was devoted to other subjects, he advanced the view that tooth decay was virtually non-existent in a society which subsisted primarily on animal products. See, Stefansson, "Food of ancient and modern stone age man", Journal of the American Dietetic Association, XIII (July, 1937), pp. 102-119; also, Charles H.M. Williams, "An Investigation Concerning the Dentitions of the Eskimos of Canada's Eastern Arctic", The American Academy of Periodontology, (1942), pp. 34-37. Although this investigation deals with the Eastern Arctic, the observations of Dr. Williams, who is now Head of the Department of Periodontics, University of Toronto, do much to substantiate Stefansson's theory.
Stefansson's work done in or about Iceland resulted in the collection of a number of skulls which did much to convince him of the relationship between the consumption of cereals and tooth decay; also in several articles the most important of which, from the viewpoint of his later career, was "The Icelandic Colony in Greenland" dealing with the disappearance of that colony. Although he knew this paper would be old hat in Europe he was persuaded to publish it by Putnam, who argued that most Americans, except those with some linguistic talents, were unaware of such studies. It was popularly believed that the remaining Icelandic colony in Greenland eventually had foresaken its true faith and mode


4Stefansson, "The Icelandic Colony in Greenland", The American Anthropologist, VIII (June, 1906), pp. 262-70. The article traced the discovery of Greenland and its subsequent colonization by Iceland, a refuge for renegade Norwegian nobility, in the late ninth and tenth centuries. At first, contact between Greenland, Iceland and the mother country Norway, was very common, but by the early fifteenth century little or nothing was heard from the tiny outposts on the west side of Greenland. In the fourteenth century, contact between the European and the native population, the Eskimo or Skraelinger, increased and this was followed by hostilities, burning, looting and kidnapping on the part of the Eskimos who were expanding southward. To write the article, reference was made to the old Icelandic Sagas dealing with Greenland and Greenlanders, the Icelandic Annals (1288-1411), and to "Diplomatic Papers", primarily papal documents relating to church affairs. All three sources were included in a three volume compilation, Greenland Historiske Mindesmaerkker (Copenhagen, 1838-45). Even Stefansson would have admitted that the article was a pot-boiler.

5Stefansson, Discovery, p. 56.
of living, and had been assimilated with the Skraelinger. Stefansson, on the other hand, concluded that the written sources, Eskimo oral tradition, and contemporary archaeological investigations, indicated that the Icelanders had been decimated rather than absorbed by the Eskimo. At the time he placed little value on the article, but his later findings in the Canadian North were to be strongly coloured by what he had learned about the mystery of the Greenland colony's disappearance. And though he had shown little interest in the Canadian North before this time, this article was to have a powerful influence in turning his gaze and imagination to that part of the Arctic and making it his field of study.

Following his return from Iceland, however, Stefansson at first indicated no burning desire to do further anthropological work in northern latitudes. For one thing, aside from Peary's well publicized attempts to reach the North Pole, there was virtually no public interest in such activity; and the lack of such a market, in turn, discouraged financial backers, the pillars of the whole business of exploration. Besides, the turn of the century was to witness a plethora of expeditions to more exotic places--South America, Africa, and the unspoiled reaches of South East Asia--the last gasp of the imperialistic impulse of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The appearance of such magazines as National Geographic, an outgrowth of the National Geographic Society (incorporated in 1888), were indicative of the appeal of romantic faraway places. The "Dark Continent" beckoned
to the restive Stefansson, and he had made tentative plans in 1906 to become a member of a British Museum expedition destined for Central East Africa.

These plans were changed when Stefansson was suddenly offered the position of anthropologist on the impressively-named Anglo-American Polar Expedition, commanded by Ejnar Mikkelsen and Ernest de Koven Leffingwell. Apparently, Leffingwell, or one of his advisers, had read Stefansson's paper on Greenland and surmised that Stefansson might be a suitably enterprising, eager person who would be willing to work for little salary in exchange for the opportunity to become a member of the expedition. Forever hard-pressed for money, the Anglo-American Polar Expedition was on the lookout for inexpensive qualified scientific staff.

The purpose of the expedition was to explore the Beaufort Sea north of Alaska in an effort to find new land, if not a new continent. No one really knew what was in the Polar Ocean, but since the middle of the nineteenth century attempts had been made to solve the mysteries of the Beaufort Sea. The captain and crew of H.M.S. Plover, reported seeing land from the deck of their ship in 1849-50. During the winter of 1853-54 Captain Collinson had attempted to sledge northward, but poor ice conditions and injuries to his party forced him back to his ship in Camden Bay, just

---

west of the Alaska-Yukon boundary. Stories had circulated amongst Eskimos and whalers that mountains of this distant land had been sighted to the north of Camden Bay when conditions were right.\(^7\)

A number of theorists, using the best scientific data then available, had concluded that land had to exist north of Alaska. The most prominent of these was Dr. Robin A. Harris, a member of the United States Geodetic and Geological Survey in Washington.\(^8\) From known tidal observations, from the heavy character of the ice which everyone

\(^7\)There was "something", indeed, in the Beaufort Sea but its discovery would have to wait some forty years. In 1946 Colonel Joseph O. Fletcher (USAF), flying high over the Beaufort Sea, picked up an unusual signal on his radar, made either by land or by an ice pack of gigantic proportions. It turned out to be an ice-floe of immense size (520 sq. Kilometers), in relation to whose thickness and hardness, all surrounding floes were as mush. The discovery of such a floating ice island, visible only from the air, was to be of major significance for the exploration of the Arctic Basin. From the ground such islands could not be detected, but from a distance their hills, valleys, gravel and huge boulders shimmering across the ice, gave the appearance of land. Since these "islands" drifted imperceptibly with the current and meandered over the entire Arctic Ocean, it was highly likely that these were the explanations for the mysterious, fleeting reports of land in the Beaufort Sea, north of Camden Bay. No one at the time, not even the most experienced Arctic traveller, could have uncovered the mystery. See Crary, A.P., Cotell, R.D., Sexton, T.F., "Preliminary Report on scientific work on Fletcher's Ice Island, T 3", Arctic, V (1952), pp. 211-223; Loenig, L.S., Greenaway, K.R., Dunbar, M., Hattersley-Smith, G., "Arctic Ice Islands", Arctic, V (1952), pp. 67-103; Zubov, N.N. "Arctic Ice Islands and how they drift" from Priroda, no. 2 (1955), pp. 37-45, Trans. E.R. Hope, Defence Research Board of Canada.

\(^8\)R.A. Harris "Evidence of land near the North Pole", Report of the 8th International Geographical Congress (1904), 397-406.
assumed was stationary, and from data provided by the polar
drifts of the *Jeannette* (1879)\(^9\) and the *Fram* (1893-96)\(^10\) Harris
not only calculated the extent of this unknown land, but
divined its exact position on contemporary maps. Harris'
theory was hotly contested in some quarters, but it was
generally accepted because people, Ejnar Mikkelsen included,
wanted to believe it.\(^11\)

The plans of Mikkelsen's and Leffingwell's expedition
were straightforward: a ship would skirt the Alaskan and
Canadian coast to Minto Inlet, on the east coast of Victoria
Island. There Leffingwell hoped to carry out a geological
study of the countryside, while Mikkelsen planned to make
sledge trips to Banks Island and possibly Prince Patrick's
Land. From these advance bases in the Canadian Arctic a
comprehensive search of the western part of the Beaufort Sea
would be initiated. In addition, the expedition was interested
in the Eskimo tribes McClure and Collinson had seen in the
Minto Inlet district in 1852. The financial support of
one of their backers was dependent on the expedition's under-

2 vols., (Boston, 1884).


p. 9.
taking some anthropological work. To meet this requirement the commanders "discovered" Stefansson.

Leffingwell was already impressed, and Mikkelsen, who made further inquiries, received strong recommendations to take Stefansson along. C.C. Adams, Secretary of the American Geographical Society, thought Stefansson a fine fellow, a "splendid man" for the expedition. Stefansson's only reservation about acceptance was his anxiety over the financing of the expedition. Accordingly, upon the advice of Putnam, Stefansson insisted that he should go to Herschel Island, the American whaling station west of the Mackenzie delta, to conduct certain other projects and commitments of his own. Besides, Stefansson claimed he did not relish the uncertainty of a sea voyage to the area in question, an attitude that Mikkelsen and Leffingwell were bound to resent. But it was made plain to them that Stefansson's employment was conditional to this, and time was running out. Unless Stefansson—or some other ethnologist—could be persuaded to join the expedition, there was the real danger that the financial backer interested in anthropology would withhold his money. With no other alternative they agreed to Stefansson's terms, hoping Adams at the American Geographical Society would persuade him to take the sea voyage.  

12 Archives of the American Geographical Society, New York City [hereafter cited as AGS], C.C. Adams to Mikkelsen, 27 March 1906.

13 AGS, Mikkelsen to Adams, 14 April 1906.
Stefansson would have to make it from Boston to Edmonton and down the Mackenzie on his own to meet them at Herschel Island.\textsuperscript{14}

The expedition had little money to spare for such a separate operation but Putnam persuaded Harvard's Peabody Museum to advance Stefansson $200 in return for ethnological specimens. For his part, Stefansson also contacted the influential James Mavor, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Toronto, whom he had met on his return from Iceland in 1905.\textsuperscript{15} This contact was to be Stefansson's passport into Canadian circles, for Mavor found Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, willing to donate $300 to the University of Toronto on behalf of the recently organized Royal Ontario Museum\textsuperscript{16} to invest in Stefansson's project. In return, the Royal Ontario Museum was also to receive specimens and information—both Indian and Eskimo—gathered by the ethnologist as he proceeded down the Mackenzie. The relationship with Walker was to prove a boon to Stefansson, and a vital future connection with Canadian business and political circles.

\textsuperscript{14}Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 57-58. The two, it seems, had become friends over chess and Mavor, then Canadian chess champion, was anxious to entertain Stefansson's ward and fellow travelling companion, Bjorn Fallson, the chess prodigy from Copenhagen.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 61-62.
Even the $500 he had now collected was munificent in comparison with the pittance Stefansson received from the Expedition. Indeed the shaky financial position ought to have been a warning to Stefansson that the whole expedition was a dubious quantity. Had Stefansson known that their ship cleared Victoria harbour with only 20 cents amongst the entire crew—not enough to pay a pursuing Chinese tailor who sputtered and fumed from a nearby launch— he might have abandoned the entire venture. Mikkelsen continually had problems raising money for the expedition to get under way, and the search for more backers was not having the anticipated response. But eventually, an aged schooner, the Beatrice, built in 1879, was secured and renamed after one of their backers, the Duchess of Bedford.

Stefansson afterwards claimed he had been made wary of travelling by ship because he could foresee the possibility of the Beatrice, which had no auxiliary power, becoming trapped in the ice. However, the agreement to go north, including Stefansson's separate operation, had been concluded before that particular vessel was purchased, or even thought

17 Mikkelsen, Mirage, pp. 36-37. Despite the backing of the Royal Geographic Society (hence the "Anglo" of the grandiose title) and the support of the Duchess of Bedford, along with funds provided by Leffingwell's father (the "American" half of the title), Mikkelsen made little further financial headway either in England or America. To add to his problem, the price of ships along the Pacific Coast was higher than anticipated.

18 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 60.
of. Nevertheless, Stefansson's overland trip and his determination not to twiddle his thumbs idly on board ship were amply vindicated by the failure of the Duchess to reach Herschel.

Before Stefansson knew it, though, he was on the Mackenzie heading into the region that was to be his home for more than a decade, armed with a few books which, he hoped, would give him the necessary background for his encounter with the North and its inhabitants: Hamburg's Travels, the works of Hall, Wrangel and Franklin, Klein Schmit's Eskimo grammar, and four volumes of poetry. His only regret was that he had not provided himself with additional literature on the Eskimo -- what little there was to be had. It appears that, initially at least, Stefansson was totally unprepared for his encounter with the Eskimo, but then, so were most travellers who entered Canada's northern latitudes. Yet the lessons learned from the Anglo-American Polar Expedition of 1906 were to be the base for his later exploits

*   *   *

---

19 Stefansson, Hunters, p. 9.

20 Archives of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, [hereafter cited as PM], VS to Miss Meade, 20 November 1906.

21 Ibid.
The first excursion into the Canadian North was to be a revelation for Stefansson, for soon after his arrival, late in the summer of 1906, at Herschel Island he was confronted with a number of unforeseen hardships. The ice conditions along the western Arctic coast during the winter of 1906-07 were unusually severe, and consequently the Duchess of Bedford had not arrived with the requisite "southern" supplies, forcing Stefansson to live as best he could. Even the whalers at Herschel Island were cut off from their own tenders. The Royal Northwest Mounted Police, with whom the novice explorer had been staying, were afraid some harm might come to him and denied him supplies in order to discourage his travelling. Stefansson tended to dismiss their warnings of starvation and "other horrors" if he remained in the North, and lost a good deal of respect for the Force. Finally, in a bid to frighten him off, the officers at Herschel told him that he "must expect no help from them in the provisions line (though they have plenty, getting one and half rations each when two-thirds of a ration is all a man can eat)." But the situation was not such as to warrant his running away from work that had to be done. Stefansson felt he had to stay. Alfred Harrison, a hardy gentleman explorer from England who took an instant

\[22\text{AGS, VS to C.C. Adams, 19 November 1906.}\]
\[23\text{Ibid.}\]
liking to the young man because of his powers of endurance and determination, offered Stefansson a share of his camp. Stefansson declined, probably preferring not to become too friendly with a man who was in direct competition with the Mikkelsen-Leffingwell Expedition; only occasionally would he travel with and visit Harrison. The alternative, then, was to make the best of the situation—something natural to Stefansson's instincts.

The determined ethnologist chose to remain true to his task of studying the natives on their own ground. The Eskimos of that locality had become extremely dependent on southern goods, particularly food stuffs since the coming of the whalers and the trappings of civilization in 1889; but in 1906, owing to the non-arrival of the supply tenders, the natives were forced to revert to their traditional hunting practices and diet. Stefansson would therefore be able to observe them under conditions approaching their "natural" state. It was an exciting opportunity to acquaint himself with the Eskimo, and his ways, for living with them was much better, from an ethnological point of view, than

---

24 Alfred H. Harrison, In Search of a Polar Continent (Toronto, 1908), p. 204; Cf. University of Toronto, Mavor Collection, Rare Book Room and Special Collections, [hereafter cited as MC], VS to Stupart [Director of Canadian Meteorological Service], 29 November 1906.

25 Cf., PM, VS to Putnam, 10 August 1906.
merely living amongst them, as other white men had.

Stefansson always tried to convey the impression that his fare was exclusively Eskimo, and his diet, like theirs, varied between "flesh straight and an occasional hunger spell." This was true, perhaps, of the two full months he spent alone in their company. But for a large part of the time he lived on a mixed fare of Eskimo and southern food and most of the time he carried whiteman's food close at hand wherever he went. If it was not used often, it was still very comforting to know that it was there, just in case. This, of course, was only reasonable for a tender-foot who had been bombarded by tales of starvation and woe.

26 PM, VS to Putnam, 28 August 1906.

27 Initially, his provisions consisted of 700 pounds of flour, 100 pounds sugar, 34 pounds coffee, 50 pounds pork, 10 cans baking powder, 40 pounds oatmeal, 25 pounds beans, 25 pounds rice, 10 gallons coal oil for the camp stoves during the winter. In September, 1906, he added a bit more to his supplies, but by this time he was certain that the winter would not affect either him or his help, because of the abundance of fish. This optimism may have been well for the early fall of 1906 but mid-November found Stefansson buying more supplies from the whaler Narwal: 25 lbs. flour, 300 lbs. of pork and some molasses; there is no record of how much their own supplies had been depleted. Although he no longer feared starvation it appears he was not going to take chances. Moreover, he became anxious for a change from the Eskimo diet. He would either winter with Mr. Harrison, who was two-hundred miles away at the south end of Eskimo Lake—if he had plenty of grub—and study the Eskimo, or buy from the Herschel Island supply steamer where goods could be bought at San Francisco prices. If neither of these were feasible he would have to go back to the coast to console himself with living on rotten fish caught during the previous summer. (PM, VS to Putnam, 20 November 1906.) He adopted the latter course and did not reach Harrison until after Christmas.
In later years, even with more Arctic experience, Stefansson still felt the same way about being as well-provisioned as possible. Nevertheless, he would try to convey the impression that this consideration never deterred him.\(^{28}\) None of this southern fare was to be eaten unless meat and fish were unavailable, and the natives, initially at least, agreed to abide by this.\(^{29}\) Such contingency food supplies were used for specific purposes; for instance, the payment of Eskimos sledding him from place to place, or for similar services.

When on the road and not living in an Eskimo village, there should have been no need to concern oneself about food for pay, for according to Stefansson, a more sophisticated system of payment existed. On a promise of $200 per year, payable upon their discharge, the Eskimo would go anywhere, provide the sled, dogs, and whaleboat, would supply whatever game and fish they could catch, keep him in Caribou and sealskin clothes and sled him around the country. Cash was not needed, only a promissory note, "for on coming out any of the whalers would trust me for a grub-order on their own stores which is fully as good as cash here, and the natives would take pay in ammunition, grub, etc., from the whalers."\(^{30}\)

\(^{28}\) See p.109; Also, pp. 239-44.

\(^{29}\) PM, VS to Putnam, 28 August 1906.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.
Eventually, the company representing the whalers would present the note to Stefansson for cash redemption.

But though Stefansson may have had well-meant intentions in keeping grub away from the natives, on occasion he found himself giving in to a mild form of Eskimo blackmail. On one journey his "travelling companion" Roxy—a "sophisticated Eskimo"—insisted that the remaining food on the sled be divided immediately or he would go no further.  

The novice had no choice but to acquiesce in order to preserve good relations and prevent his being abandoned. In fact, throughout his northern career, there were to be occasions involving his white companions as well as the natives when a similar course proved prudent.  

By January, 1907, Stefansson's prospects of living with the Eskimo in a satisfactory way were considerably brighter "tho more portable provisions would be [an] immense help." On hand were 12 sacks of flour, 50 lbs. rice, 40 lbs. oatmeal, plenty of tea and coffee, 60 lbs. sugar, molasses, apples, syrup, salt and spices. He was "very well off" indeed, although there was some concern over the party's inability to keep up with the pace of his dogs' consumption of the fish fodder.  

\[31\] SC, Stefansson Diary, 2 October 1906.

\[32\] For example, see p.247 , footnote 44. Also, Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, (New York, 1921), pp. 576-583.

\[33\] SC, Stefansson Diary, 1 January 1907.
was off to Herschel to buy food, from the missionaries if possible. But it was a very bad year for everyone and no one was particularly interested in selling any substantial amounts. So Stefansson again settled down with only a few gastronomical amenities of civilization to live and work among the Eskimos.

When he had to, though, he adapted remarkably well. He could report back on occasion that "[a]ppetite and health always good, and always plenty to eat--cheerfully given. In fact about the best way of ingratiating oneself is eating hugely--which I seem always competent to do. The knife-fork-and-plate prejudices have left me and my fingers have been fork and dish for some time now. The fish diet does not pall at all...." He forgot his earlier lament about the inferior cooking of the Eskimo, and before the year was out had even overcome his childhood aversion to fish. Eventually, the fish diet did not bother him and, contrary to his expectations, he did not "hanker" after salt, though he did find himself continually hungry for sugar. On the whole, however, he had survived rather comfortably, and later gave the impression he had done it mostly on his own.

---

34SC, Stefansson Diary, 31 January 1907.
35SC, Stefansson Diary, 21 December 1906.
36PM, VS to Miss Meade, 20 November 1906.
37SC, Stefansson Diary, 1 [January] 1907.
Even the winters were not discouraging or intimidating. The blizzard he experienced in November was, he considered, equal to an ordinary North Dakota blizzard, "but not a star performance."\textsuperscript{38} His worst ordeal with an Arctic storm came in February, 1907, but that experience left him with nothing but minor frostbite.\textsuperscript{39}

With so much time and effort being spent on making certain that food supplies and food suppliers were adequate, Stefansson felt that the scientific results of his investigation were paltry, and was even ready to admit this privately to James Mavor. By late April, 1907, although he had forwarded a few items (e.g. fish nets) to Putnam,\textsuperscript{40} Stefansson conceded that "nothing I have found so far will enable me to bolster up any revolutionary theory and so distinguish myself."\textsuperscript{41} The fact was, however, that he was learning much from his Eskimo companions and their way of life.\textsuperscript{42} There was one glimmer of success if he could obtain some interest and support for a more elaborate undertaking, however; for, as early as mid-August, 1906, he confided to Putnam that he had evidence of truly primitive Eskimos

\textsuperscript{38} SC, Stefansson Diary, 20 November 1906.

\textsuperscript{39} SC, Stefansson Diary, 12 February 1907.

\textsuperscript{40} PM, Stefansson to Putnam, 29 May 1906.

\textsuperscript{41} MC, VS to Mavor, 28 April 1907.

\textsuperscript{42} For the overall results of this expedition and its affect on Stefansson, see pp. 67-77.
residing in Prince Albert Land.43

A ship, the Olga, driven east by thick ice during the winter of 1905-06, had wintered in Prince Albert Sound. In February, 1906, the captain, "Charlie" Klengenberg, made a sled journey to Minto Inlet where he came in contact with two tribes of natives among whom he remained for several months. The natives, apparently, had never seen a white man, had never had any dealings with traders or whalers, nor even the Eskimos to the south of them.44 They had no guns, only primitive spears and bows and other weapons made of copper. Klengenberg even was told by his Eskimo guides, that another group of these "wild people" sported red hair and beards.45 He may have passed along such observations, but not for a moment did the Olga's captain believe them.46

Stefansson, however, was keenly excited by the story, and he and Roald Amundsen--whom he had met on board the Gjøa at the time of its arrival at Herschel Island--both tried to buy Klengenberg's unique copper artifacts, soapstone curios, and musk-ox bows, but Klengenberg shrugged them

---

43PM, VS to Putnam, 14 August 1906.


46Ibid.
off. The small "treasures", though, were tantalizing, and Stefansson could hardly contain his enthusiasm. "This is encouraging--so also is the statement that game is plenty and driftwood obtainable--but," he lamented, "it is difficult to be unselfish enough to be glad so large a part of one's work has been forestalled." These last few words were a reference to the opinion of experienced whalers that Minto Inlet would be impossible to reach that particular year, and his own fears that the commanders of the expedition might therefore abandon the project of sailing to Minto Inlet. "In that event I shall separate from the expedition", Stefansson decided, and hire an Eskimo family to take him to Coronation Gulf to see these strange people.

The planned visit to Minto Inlet never materialized at this time. The unusual supply situation forced him to stay close to the Mackenzie delta and subsist on the generosity of the local Eskimos. Yet, despite the ethnological

---

47 *Ibid.*, p. 239. Stefansson's letter to Putnam, 14 August 1906, does not mention any attempt to purchase such items, although in other details it corresponds with Klengenberg's later reminiscences. It is probable, though, that Stefansson would try to purchase such items if he could. This was a normal practice and Stefansson had been worried that he would not be able to obtain enough artifacts for both the Royal Ontario Museum and Harvard. MC, Stefansson to Mavor, 28 April 1907.

48 PM, VS to Putnam, 14 August 1906.

"gold mine" on Victoria Island, this living-in with the natives was probably the most valuable experience he could have gained at this time.

The fact that the entire Leffingwell-Mikkelsen expedition was in bad shape, continuously plagued by poverty, bad luck and poor judgement, as Mikkelsen himself admitted, may have added to Stefansson's determination to strike out on his own. For one thing he could not be sure whether he had the full backing of that expedition for this promising, once-in-a-lifetime, ethnological venture. Before long, civilization in the form of numerous Klengenbergs might reach these isolated people and ruin his chances for original, ground-breaking work. "Contamination from the...vanguard of civilization--the hunter the trader and missionary--is spreading so fast, that, in most sections, ethnological work could be much more successfully carried forward now

The expedition had run completely out of money to carry forward its projects. Mikkelsen sent off frantic letters to former backers hoping to coax them into continued support. Mikkelsen fell into the same trap as most explorers: discordant objectives, the inability to secure adequate funds to begin with, not just for the immediate needs and plans of the expedition, but for contingencies, unexpected hardships and handicaps. Wrong basic assumptions, such as the direction of current they expected to find in the Beaufort Sea, entailed expensive replanning. The devastating winter had caused the Duchess of Bedford to fall prey to ice; sledding over the ice was difficult, almost impossible. Delays meant more money was necessary and none was to be found. Yet it had to be found if Mikkelsen was to continue his offshore exploration. He considered he was doing pioneer work, and, even though his soundings indicated that the continental shelf dropped away quickly and that the mythical "Keenan Land" would never be, he continued to believe in the existence of an Arctic continent. Money and moral support now--tomorrow would be different. AGS, Mikkelsen to Chandler Robins, 20 June 1907; Mikkelsen to American Geographical Society, 19 June 1907.
than ten years hence.\textsuperscript{51} He was certain the Eskimo arcadia was doomed, and concluded, sarcastically and bitterly, that it would "not long escape the influence of the missionaries whom our spare pennies support in their work of 'carrying light to the dark places of the earth'."\textsuperscript{52}

Stefansson severed his ties with the Anglo-American Polar Expedition in August, 1907. Ostensibly he returned to civilization to contradict the "shocking" and false report that Mikkelsen, Leffingwell and their party had perished in the Beaufort Sea. It was a humanitarian gesture to offset an injury that such news might bring to Mikkelsen's ailing mother. Yet his departure raises a few questions which have a bearing on this investigation. Later, some of his detractors charged that he had abandoned the expedition to capitalize on the publicity attached to his reports to the papers that no tragedy had befallen Mikkelsen and the others.\textsuperscript{53} Stefansson apparently, did agree in mid July, 1907, to stay on another year,\textsuperscript{54} then within a month he completely

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{53}PAC, Craford Papers, Mrs. R.M. Anderson to Mrs. Crawford, 20 January 1924. Also, PAC, RG45, Geological Survey Branch file 4078C/57, "V. Stefansson, Personal and Controversies", Rudolph Anderson to Charles Camseil [Deputy Minister of Mines], 4 January 1921.

\textsuperscript{54}E. Mikkelsen, Conquering the Arctic Ice, (London, 1909), p. 298.
changed his mind. In the two or three weeks between deciding to stay another year (July, 1907) and determining to leave, Stefansson must have reached the decision that the expedition was on the rocks and held nothing for him; he had better abandon it while the going was good and organize his own expedition to carry out his purposes. On 6 August he left the Anglo-American Polar Expedition to journey home.

Mikkelsen hoped, believed, or pretended to believe, that Stefansson intended to rejoin the expedition. On 13 August, a full week after Stefansson had made his intentions clear and left for the outside, Mikkelsen sent out a report to the American Geographic Society to the effect that all was going according to plan. He reported that he expected to be dropped off at Banks Land, go out on the ice and follow the continental shelf as far as Herschel Island--no doubt to verify what he had already discovered. "Mr. Leffingwell and Mr. Stefansson", he went on, "will go eastward too, with another family to work around the Coppermine River, and if nothing unforeseen happens, we will carry out the program laid out at the start....If the money come you will please pay the wages out [of] that amount, and let Mr. Steaffensen

55 Later, Stefansson stated that Mikkelsen and Leffingwell informed him that the expedition was "practically over" and that he decided to "sever his connections" and organize his own expedition to study the people of Victoria Land. Stefansson, Hunters, pp. 191, 207.

56 See p. 56, footnote 50.
use what of it he needs for his expenses involved in coming back to the Arctic, and for other things he needs...." One must conclude that the commander was only bluffing about his ethnologist's imminent return to the expedition, trying to allay fears that Stefansson's departure revealed the true sinking condition of the expedition's affairs. If further support for the research could be obtained before the truth were known, the expedition--and a few reputations--might be salvaged.

Stefansson, too, was slightly misleading in his initial handling of the news of the expedition, for in an article summing up its progress to date, he declared that a large part of the work was unfinished, and that he himself was planning to return to the area.58 True enough, he was to return at the first opportunity, but it would be on his own and not as a member of the teetering Anglo-American Polar Expedition.

For even if Stefansson had given Mikkelsen grounds for believing he would return to the expedition, as things developed, he had every justification for changing his mind. If anything, despite Mikkelsen's good intentions, it was

57 AGS, Mikkelsen to American Geographical Society, 13 August 1907. Original spellings retained.

the expedition that abandoned Stefansson. The expedition still owed Stefansson some $750\textsuperscript{59} and Mikkelsen had defaulted on his obligations to the young ethnologist by issuing him numerous worthless drafts as payment for his services.\textsuperscript{60} The whole situation caused Stefansson much personal and financial embarrassment and he could only consider himself lucky to get out when he did.

Stefansson returned to New York penniless, making it impossible for him to live and to meet all his debts—or those the expedition had placed upon him. In desperation he turned to the American Geographical Society, under the

\textsuperscript{59} Archives of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City [hereafter cited as AMNH], file 719A. VS to Herman C. Bumpus [director of American Museum of Natural History], 29 August 1908.

\textsuperscript{60} For example, in one instance, according to K.G. Chipman writing to O.E. LeRoy of the Geological Survey some eight years later, when neither commander had money to repay his expenses, Stefansson accepted a draft from Mikkelsen, that the latter had received from an officer of the Danish Navy. Apparently it was to have been used for a specific purpose, and since the expedition had been unable to carry out the promised work the order had never been spent. Stefansson took the order in good faith and cashed it at Fort McPherson on his way out. Eventually, when the Hudson's Bay Company forwarded the draft to Denmark, the issuer refused to honour it, putting Stefansson in an embarrassing position when the company came back on him for its money. Private papers of Mr. Kenneth G. Chipman, 85 Range Road, Ottawa, K.G. Chipman to Mr. LeRoy, 15 July 1915. Stefansson went to Leffingwell's father with his tale of woe. The senior Leffingwell was exasperated by the carryings on of the Anglo-American Polar Expedition. AGS, Dr. C.W. Leffingwell to Chandler Robins, 27 February 1907. He loaned Stefansson $500, against the notes, at 6%. Eventually, Mikkelsen took up Stefansson's note to Leffingwell to make good his obligations. AMNH, file 719A, VS to Bumpus, 29 August 1908. But the damage had been done.
impression that it was partly responsible for any financial obligations that Mikkelsen incurred. But the Society refused to honour the unauthorized drafts. Their role was entirely auxiliary and supplementary to the English promoters of the expedition, who, if anybody, were the responsible parties.  

Stefansson had been misled. The American Geographical was sympathetic but could not help him financially; all they could do was provide him with a desk and encourage him to write scientific articles as a prelude to launching a campaign for his own expedition to Victoria Land. He had to write three "popular" accounts of his exploits, including a summary of the work of the Anglo-American Polar Expedition, for Harper's, "to get money to live during the winter."  

* * * * *

The fate of the Anglo-American Polar Expedition and its personal consequences for Stefansson were a bitter experience and a stinging lesson. In future years he would go to great lengths to see it would not happen again. He was determined henceforth to be his own master, in command of the situation, responsible for his own fate to the best of

---

61 AGS, American Geographical Society to Mikkelsen, 13 December 1907.


63 MC, VS to Mavor, 5 November 1907.
his ability. Moreover, as leader of his own expedition, he would see that his enterprise was as well and securely financed as possible.

Nevertheless, the northern trip had its positive aspects from the point of view of Stefansson's future endeavours. His living with the Eskimos, his observations of their culture, and his increasing ability to speak their language, provided him with an opportunity to contribute something, which he believed, would be stimulating and provocative. His writings on the North and his concept of the Eskimo were to help him secure the recognition he sought. His learning of the Minto Inlet people would also provide him with a major purpose for his next expedition.

The definitive record of this particular journey, however, was not written immediately upon his return south, as later became his custom. Rather, Hunters of the Great North only appeared belatedly in 1922. This was a pity, because by that time, the book was obviously influenced by his later Arctic experiences and lacked originality. In reality, the book was an overworked version of his "popular" writing. The author himself realized the book's deficiencies and confessed that he regarded it as his "worst book".64 Hunters followed an approach that had become his trademark: full, vividly detailed accounts. A fetish was made of

64 Inscription by VS to Aileen Larkin, 24 July 1923, in flyleaf of Stefansson's The Northward Course of Empire (London, 1922). This particular copy is in the possession of the writer.
describing the Eskimo fare, their table manners, and the "state" (usually rotten) of the food to be consumed.

This applied even to his contemporary articles, in which one could discern almost an obsession, perhaps bred by deprivation, with the simple subject of food. One could argue that this was itself a faithful representation of the Eskimo mentality and give Stefansson due credit for his adaptability in true Spencerian fashion. Stefansson may have been committed emotionally or in the interests of scholarly accuracy—perhaps to enhance his own stature. Yet, his iconoclastic nature inclined him to reject the tried-and-true methods of describing Arctic travels, with their accounts of great suffering and misery that made "appetizing" reading for the morbid few. Stefansson even suggested that once the reading public became "intelligently" acquainted with the facts and conditions of the north, such outdated descriptions would rate only as works of humour.65 His own writings, he believed, would explode such myths. He once said that "most arctic hardships are of two not over formidable types—those caused chiefly, or solely, by the ignorance of the trapper in selecting his outfit and conducting himself [like the Eskimo] while on the road, and those depending as to their character of severity solely on the imaginative power

of the man who writes up the expedition with a view of making the manuscript readable and income-produce[ing]."\(^{66}\)

Yet because he saw it as his duty to familiarize people with the North, and because he underplayed the sensational or morbid, he too eventually had to employ "imaginative power" to turn mundane, everyday occurrences, into bright, appealing subjects. Stefansson was aware of the process which produced "imaginative" writing. He later acknowledged that he was prone to exaggeration, and perhaps even mis-representation, although he did not consider himself "really a liar."\(^{67}\)

...I...have often found on belated reference to my diary that I have told to[o] many men on many occasions...facts and feelings which seem to have been absent at the time of an "adventure" but which have by some mental process attached themself to it later and have become vivid as the real facts or have now overshadowed them and even obliterated the facts. Where my contemporaneous record of an event is meagre these adventitious elements are bound to remain undetected and become for me and anyone who believes me, as if they had happened.\(^{68}\)

Stefansson's flair for style produced well-written and lucid prose and that, in itself, made for fascinating and enjoyable reading in leisure hours. The chapters of

\(^{66}\) Sc, 1903-06, uncatalogued, VS to "Charlie" [Karsten Andersen], 27 May 1907.

\(^{67}\) Sc, Stefansson Diary, 10 December 1909.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.
most of his books, however, manage to convey a self-indulgent, a paternalistic impression, vividly emphasizing the bizarre for his comfortable Canadian, American and British audience, while portraying it as something very common, very ordinary, very "humdrum". There was always an unspoken (but carefully underlined) pride in his being able to adapt to the Eskimo way and to the northern environment, to become popular with, and respected by, the native--itself a singular honour--who more often than not scoffed at the outsider. The accounts of all his later expeditions contained episodes which were turned into flashes of high adventure, tales of physical endurance and daring, something that his articles, written at an early, more immediate date for Harper's Magazine for instance, underplayed. Yet even in them, the emphasis on the ease and simplicity of living in the Canadian North was evident.

Just as important as employing his unique literary devices to reach his audiences were his efforts to acquaint Canadians and others with the character of the Eskimo. Again, it was his straitened circumstances during the Anglo-American Polar Expedition that gave him an opportunity to observe their habits at usually close quarters. The Eskimo families had provided him with folk-lore and with cranial measurements, and more important, had fed and kept him during the brutal winter of 1906-07. As he admitted, he was their "guest", 
and they, perfect hosts.

In this first expedition, as in later ones, Stefansson admired the nobility of the Eskimo. The Eskimo were a fine, clean, strong people, honest, energetic and reliable—"a great contrast to the Indian who is too lazy to work when you want him and too unreliable if you don't watch [him]." On one trip in a whaleboat from Fort McPherson to Herschel Island he was dismayed by the actions of the Indian on board, in contrast to the hardworking and dedicated Eskimo. Although receiving the same pay, the Indian always shirked his duties, whined and complained even of light work he had to do. Besides, he was frivolous—something the budding explorer could not tolerate. Yet despite his obvious inadequacies, the Indian remained haughty and aloof when he had no right to be so. The Loucheux Indians (Athapaskans) that he encountered, he felt, were the parasites of the North, making no attempt to hunt and exist like the proud Eskimos. Although he made no attempt to understand the historical, economic and sociological reasons for their behaviour, he condemned them out of hand for being less than self-sufficient, upstanding specimens of the human race.

69 PM, VS to Putnam, 10 August 1906.

The self-sufficient, honest Eskimo, on the other hand, seemed to express a childlike joy, with no pretense of sombreness, reserve or formality.\textsuperscript{71} The noble Eskimo became, perhaps inaccurately, Stefansson's ideal person: "Evolution through centuries has ground these northerners into well-nigh perfect adaptation to their surroundings, so that they live in well-being and a general high degree of creative comfort in one of the least fruitful sections of the world."\textsuperscript{72} They were far from being uncivilized, savage; they had been able to adapt to their relatively hostile environment, and, to Stefansson, "adaptability", along with industry and inventiveness which the Eskimo displayed, were important hallmarks of progress and civilization.\textsuperscript{73} The Eskimos were the pathfinders who would show the white man how to survive in the North—if the white man had the patience to do as Romans when in Rome, "and the Romans, in this case, are not so much the explorers who have gone before...as the Eskimo. They are an ingenious and very resourceful people from among whom the wind and frost have weeded out those who did not adapt themselves pretty well to their surroundings."\textsuperscript{74} The Eskimo had met the

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} Stefansson, "Suitability of Eskimo methods of winter travel in scientific exploration", \textit{American Geographical Society Bulletin}, XL (April, 1908), p. 211.

\textsuperscript{73} See Chapter II, pp. 31-32.

\textsuperscript{74} SC, 1903-06 uncatalogued, VS to "Charlie", 21 May 1907.
challenge, and the northland was theirs. And they had done it without knowledge of Spencer while proving that philosopher's thesis to the hilt.

Furthermore, Stefansson marvelled at their courtesy and gentleness, thinking, at first, it was due to the missionary work emanating from Herschel Island until he learned from his "unsophisticated" hosts that such traits had not been implanted by the missionary: "The kindness of these people is such that I cannot see how anyone who knows them can wish more for anything than that he was rich and could repay their kindness fully. The manner of it is even more felt than the matter—they do everything so natural and delicately that the best 'breeding' could not improve upon it."\(^7\)

In many things, Stefansson concluded, the white men were superior to the Eskimo, but in some the white men were the Eskimo's inferior. The Eskimo, using techniques superior to those of a southern tailor or furrier, could make better garments against the cold with the materials at hand. He had proved he could thrive on the "barren wastes", secure sufficient food through his prowess as a hunter, and create ingenious accommodation out of animal hides or blocks of snow, whereas in such an environment a New Englander would

---

\(^7\) Stefansson, "Wintering Among the Eskimos", p. [38].

\(^7\) SC, Stefansson Diary, 10 September 1906.
surely die. At the same time, the Eskimo's moral superiority was quite impressive when matched against the white man's standard of conduct and behaviour. In contrast to the outsider, the Eskimo, according to Stefansson, held an advanced concept of individual equality, was less selfish, more helpful to his fellow man, and more reticent about the faults of his neighbour than any but the "rarest and best of our race."\(^{77}\) If anything, Stefansson was reviving and updating the concept of the "noble savage".

The Eskimo's communistic way of life was very practical, a necessary adaptation to their circumstances.\(^ {78}\) That this modified form of communism would produce parasites seemed to have little effect on the Eskimo, observed Stefansson. Some, it was true, were more energetic than others, but at least each tried to do something, and all had been brought up in the tradition of pulling together; they did not seem to be preoccupied with those who did or did not work, because such a concept was foreign to them.\(^ {79}\) Stefansson glossed over the fact that if, either through laziness or infirmity, parasites did exist, there would have been no place for them in that particular society. Nevertheless, "[the] charming qualities of the Eskimo home may be due largely to their equable disposition and to the general fitness


\(^{78}\) SC, Stefansson Diary, 22 December 1906.

\(^{79}\) Ibid.
of their character for the communal relations, but it seems reasonable to give a portion of the credit to their remarkable social organization, for they live under conditions for which some of our best men are striving, conditions that with our idealists are as yet, merely dreams."\(^8\) Active co-operation was an essential condition for survival in a land of uncertainties. Keeping this in mind, Stefansson realized that it would be wiser and more profitable for an ethnologist who needed to study them at close quarters to co-operate with the Eskimo, rather than create a master-servant relationship, like the explorers of the Peary school who needed the native for reasons of labour. On many later occasions, Stefansson's relationship with them was conducted on this friend-to-friend basis.

Stefansson's iconoclastic nature, as well as the evidence before his own eyes, compelled him to try to dispel the myths surrounding the Eskimo and the northern environment. Besides, like a number of anthropologists at that time, he had been influenced by the postulates of Franz Boas who did not hold to the unilinear theory of human social evolution but criticized the notion that western European civilization was "higher" and all other races were to be considered as belonging to some lower order.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Stefansson, "The Home Life of the Eskimo", p. 730.

\(^9\) Franz Boas, "Human Faculty as Determined by Race", Proceedings, American Association for the Advancement of Science, XLIII (1894), pp. 301-327.
or fourteen years after Boas had made these observations, this became Stefansson's full-time crusade. His aim, he insisted, was to combine scientific writing with straightforward narrative in order to make known the facts which justified his affection and admiration for these remarkable people. He hoped his audience would read between the lines and see "the truth that in even savage bosoms every heart is human. That is a fact which, if understood, contributes to one's general satisfaction in life." 82

This first short expedition was a reconnaissance trip, a time to scout the situation, a time to acclimatize himself. Stefansson came away from this experience with a better grasp of the Eskimo language, their folklore, and their secrets of how to survive. It was a period in which Stefansson came to realize that, from his point of view, the North after all was not so bad, so inhospitable. Here, if anything, was something new to emphasize, a subject which should appeal to the imagination of professional and layman alike. The fresh, provocative approach might just turn established theories on their heads, to the delight and profit of its exponent.

Moreover, there was a revival of his self-confidence, shaken somewhat during his first two or three months above the Arctic Circle, when he had not felt in command of the situation, but at the mercy of the elements, the natives, 82Stefansson, "The Home Life of the Eskimo", p. 721.
and circumstances. To be in such a situation for any lengthy period was intolerable to a man who regarded himself as superior to fate and the captain of his destiny. True to his principles of self-sufficiency and living by his wits, he had managed to meet most obstacles successfully, and later to take advantage of whatever the North had to offer.

The Anglo-American Polar Expedition was behind him and he would not look back to it except to learn from its organizational failures. Stefansson's Arctic initiation was over. He had come to the conclusion that the Canadian Arctic was to be his workshop for years to come, the region where he was to devote his talents and win fame and achieve self-fulfillment. Stefansson now set out to organize another expedition that was fully his own--to claim his "gold mine" on Victoria Land and to make a name for himself.
CHAPTER IV

GOLD MINES: THE EXPEDITION TO VICTORIA LAND

Like the Anglo-American Polar Expedition, conception and execution of the next expedition (1908-12) was another vital stage, an upward step, in Stefansson's career and his relationship with Canada. His new venture into the Arctic would see him apply the lessons he learned in 1906-07. In this expedition he would improve his technique as an explorer by learning first hand the mechanics of launching an expedition, and improving his skill in negotiating to keep the enterprise alive when its sponsors seemed skeptical. Moreover, he would gain such success so as to widen immeasurably his base of support. It would bring him immediate fame, as well as controversy. His find of primitive Eskimos in Victoria Land, the methods he applied to their investigation, and the controversies generated by his theories would catapult him into world headlines and put his northern pursuits on an altered course. The four years of this expedition would enhance his influence with American scientific institutions, and with important forces within the Canadian government. These invaluable connections would further his career in Canada. Also of importance for Stefansson's future
career was his association with Rudolph M. Anderson who accompanied him on this trip to the coast of the western Arctic. Thus the relationship between these two men must also be traced and understood, for it would have direct bearing on Stefansson's future on the Canadian scene and the so-called "Feud that Froze the Arctic." Stefansson would return from this second expedition with credentials that made it possible for him to lead, on his third foray into the Arctic, the most elaborate northern expedition undertaken by the Canadian government until recent times.

The fall and winter of 1907 was a period of incubation when Stefansson's plans for his own expedition were being crystallized--and time well-spent in learning the art of promoting his project. It was also a time for establishing valuable personal contacts amongst prospective backers, amongst influential individuals in scientific organizations in New York City.

His ideas were clarified by his articles in Harper's and particularly by such scientific articles as "The Suitability of Eskimo Methods of Winter Travel in Scientific Exploration" published in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, February, 1908. It was this last,

\[\text{1Le Bourdais, pp. 9-15, 173-191.}\]
supported by the force of Stefansson's persuasive personality, that endeared him to the American Museum of Natural History. This article presented a cogent plan for furthering scientific investigation of the North without undergoing the usual high costs, for, as the title suggested, adopting Eskimo travel methods—doing in Rome as the Romans did—would be the most efficient method of scientific investigation:

The writer has no thought of saying that such undertakings are practicable or even safe for the average traveller; but among our millions there should be at least a few who, by undertaking smaller things at first and gradually practising the technique of travel, could come to equal the best achievements of the past and even set new standards. It goes without saying that the "man with one blanket" travels faster and more cheaply than one cumbered with baggage and obsessed with the idea that this luxury and that convenience cannot be left behind.²

Thus Stefansson would replace "approved Arctic clothing" with Eskimo clothes, "especially designed sleds" by Eskimo sleds, tents by the snow house, and civilized food by an Eskimo diet.³ His experiences in the previous expedition were quoted as giving validity to his contentions:

The entire year was such as to make [the writer] not at all reluctant to return to the same country and same mode of life for another year, his conclusion from the experience of thirteen months was that there is much opportunity in the Arctic for good scientific work in new fields with less than half the discomfort and less than a tenth of the expense that one usually wasted on such undertakings.⁴


⁴ Ibid., p. 213.
Such arguments were directed not only at the general public but at the affluent American Museum of Natural History in particular. The American Geographic Society, it appears, did not have the financial means to sustain an Arctic expedition. Nor did it wish to become involved in another polar expedition which might suffer the same fate as the Anglo-American Polar Expedition. But the American Geographic, and Cyrus Adams, its secretary, introduced Stefansson to several influential members of the Museum, including Clark Wissler, the curator of anthropology, Herman C. Bumpus, the director, and Henry Fairfield Osborn, the president of the institution.\(^5\) Informal talks took place over the winter months, and by late February, Stefansson, probably assured by them of the Museum's support, put forward a formal plan of exploration and scientific study. Stefansson had laid the groundwork reasonably well and his audience had been suitably impressed.

According to the plan, Stefansson was to spend the winter of 1908-09 on or near Victoria Land collecting ethnological information pertaining to the fabled Eskimo tribe that Klengenberg and his crew had described. The one-man expedition would leave Athabaska Landing in May of 1908, reaching Ft. McPherson by July 20, Herschel Island by the first week in August. The next stop would be Baillie Island, \(^5\)Stefansson, Discovery, p. 101.
east of Herschel Island. From there he hoped to work his way eastward by a small boat, and establish the main winter camp somewhere between Cape Perry and the Coppermine River. Victoria Land would be reached by sailing or sledging across Dolphin and Union Straits. Stefansson would then swoop down upon the unsuspecting inhabitants (if they were still there), gather as much information and specimens as he could, and be back in New York by the autumn of 1909.6

The plan was extremely vague and assumed that the details of planning, organization and direction were to be left to him. Nevertheless, in its particulars relating to the explorer himself, the plan demonstrated a very well developed ability and self-confidence based on Stefansson's previous experiences, to protect his own interests while leaving him free to operate in the areas he desired. The ethnologist appeared very optimistic about bringing back sufficient information about this unknown "tribe" within a year, but perhaps this reflected some previous intimation that the American Museum would not sponsor a longer expedition, whose object was based more on rumour and hearsay than on fact. Only tangible evidence that a fruitful field of endeavour existed might result in additional and continued support.7

6 AMNH, file 719A. Stefansson to American Museum of Natural History, 25 February 1908.

7 See p. 91.
Besides requesting financial assistance from the American Museum, Stefansson asked that "the nature of the Museum's demands and expectations shall be clearly set forth in writing so that I will be definitely informed of them." Naturally, after the Mikkelsen-Leffingwell fiasco he did not wish to take unnecessary chances with a haphazard arrangement which could only repeat that unhappy experience. The Museum would be assured of a fair return for its investment, but the extra conditions that he asked for were designed to protect and further his interests.

Stefansson proposed that he should be free to lecture about the proposed trip and to sell in advance, or after his return, his popular account of the expedition in the form of a book or periodical. He was to have freedom to dispose of duplicate specimens, the Museum being the sole judge of whether any specimen was a duplicate, and to use prints of photographs taken during the adventure. Finally, it should be understood "that I am free to do or not to do anything not provided for or clearly implied in my agreement with the museum" and "to give out, either before going north or after my return, any statement concerning my purposes, plans or results, and that the museum shall have no special right to criticize such utterances unless they misrepresent, or unduly

8AMNH, file 719A. VS to AMNH, 25 February 1908.
minimize, the Museum's share in the undertaking in question."

Once the Museum accepted these conditions, Stefansson would be on his own, his own master, and the Museum would have little control over the entire affair. Three days after he advanced his proposals, the Museum responded. With minor exceptions, his conditions were fully met. True, the Museum insisted on retaining "a general supervision of the scientific work", but this was a rather weak, indefinite check on the unknown, Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

The Museum appropriated only $1250 for the expedition—$250 to purchase a boat, and $1000 to be expended in collecting anthropological data and specimens. The Museum tried to be as generous as it could and, as long as Stefansson came back with something, regardless of the quality, it would likely be satisfied. The Museum did not have a northern collection to speak of, so anything that Stefansson could add, whether from Victoria Land, or elsewhere in the Canadian Arctic, would enhance their holdings. The Museum, which was entering virgin territory as far as it was concerned, also did not insist that Stefansson visit any particular region between Alaska and Hudson Bay but gave him a completely free hand: "Good work in any part of the region will be acceptable to us," it said.

9 Ibid.

10 AMNH, file 719A. Clark Wissler to VS, 28 February 1908.

11 Ibid.
Stefansson had his expedition, almost completely as he wished it.

Officially, the expedition was to be known as the Stefansson Expedition, though Stefansson himself was to receive no salary. His refusal of a salary had enhanced the project in the eyes of the Museum since this seemed to promise a very economical operation from their point of view. Refusing a salary from a scientific institution or later, from government bodies, had the effect of leaving him a free agent. Stefansson would always prefer a grant to a salary, "for a grant leaves me my own master and a salary makes me dependent."\(^{12}\)

The route was to be much as outlined in Stefansson's proposal: to proceed down the Mackenzie River, and from there either east toward Coronation Gulf or west in the direction of the Colville River district as he himself might elect. The first objective of the expedition was a scientific study of the Eskimo; the second, the securing of a collection for the American Museum of Natural History, "which will illustrate as exclusively as possible the material cultures of the uncivilized tribes of the country," any surplus going to the

\(^{12}\) SC, 1903-06 uncatalogued material, VS to Mayor, 21 January 1911, postscript to a letter written 12 December 1910.
Peabody Museum. Finally, the commander was at liberty to enter private agreements with other institutions as he saw fit, provided they did not interfere with the prime objects of the expedition. ¹³

This last concession encouraged Stefansson to undertake some work for two Canadian government agencies which was to pave the way for more ambitious Canadian enterprises, officially sponsored by the Dominion government itself, in the years to come. Work for the Meteorological Service of Canada, and the Geological Survey of Canada would enhance considerably the prestige of his tiny expedition and also help finance the operation. Stefansson could not afford to let any opportunity to obtain money for the expedition slip through his hands. ¹⁴

The Meteorological Service of Canada, under the direction of R.F. Stupart, was anxious to establish six observation stations along the Mackenzie River. This plan had been initiated in Washington by the Carnegie Institute's

¹³ Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa [hereafter PAC], Papers of Dr. Rudolph Martin Anderson, Manuscript Group 30/C3 [hereafter RMA]/Volume 1, Bumpas to VS, 13 April 1908.

¹⁴ He even went so far as to arrange free passage on the Canadian Northern Railways from Winnipeg to Edmonton to avoid having to dip into the expedition funds. SC, 1903-17 Correspondence, VS to Stupart [Director of the Meteorological Service of Canada], 31 March 1908. He tried to obtain the same thing from the Canadian Pacific to get to Winnipeg and impressed upon them "any newspaper and magazine writings were a valuable advertisement for the Canadian Northwest, and were therefore, in the interest of the Canadian Pacific Railway." Ibid. The Canadian Pacific was singularly unimpressed, and the refusal left Stefansson disappointed and shaken. SC, 1903-17 Correspondence, VS to Stupart, 4 April 1908.
department of terrestrial magnetism, and Stupart's department was to implement the project in northwestern Canada. Among other things, this extra duty would help Stefansson defray his expenses of travel down the Mackenzie, for he could claim reduced rates from the Hudson's Bay Company on the grounds of his being an agent of the Canadian government.  

In addition, the small financial support and patronage of the Geological Survey was to prove most fruitful. The financial support was most welcome, while the association would reinforce the professional respectability of the expedition. Moreover, the backing of the Geological Survey was to give Stefansson an insight into the mind and motivations of the Canadian bureaucracy, and establish a valuable entrée that led to the 1913-18 expedition. The Geological Survey was most anxious to learn more about Stefansson's planned expedition to the Canadian northlands, and urged him to come to Ottawa before going North. On April 21, 1908, accordingly, Stefansson conferred with a number of Canadian officials. In the morning he arranged with the Minister of Customs, Honourable William Paterson, to exempt from all customs all imported 

---

15 SC, 1903-17 Correspondence, VS to Stupart, 28 February 1908.

16 SC, 1903-17 Correspondence, VS to Stupart, 2 April 1908.

17 SC, 1903-17 Correspondence, VS to Stupart, 10 September 1908.
supplies destined for the expedition, apart from ammunition.¹⁸ The interview with the Geological Survey following lunch was highly successful. R.W. Brock, director of the Survey, anxious to build up the prestige of his branch and expand its anthropological activities in connection with the new National Museum, invited the young man to place the expedition under the auspices of the Survey as well as of the American Museum.¹⁹ Brock wanted both geological specimens and part of the ethnological results, "for he wants this expedition as an entering wedge for ethnology into his department."²⁰

Stefansson exaggerated the complete novelty of his role for certainly this was no "entering wedge", though it was true that the Survey had never before done any serious study of the Western Arctic Eskimo. As far back as the 1880's the Geological Survey had been seriously interested in the scientific investigation of the native peoples of Canada and this was part of its function by legislation. True, the Survey's interest up to this point had been "spasmodic and entirely secondary", and carried on by the geological staff. The works of men like Doctors G.M. Dawson and Robert Bell in these ethnological pursuits cannot be discounted, while Bell, A.P. Low, Charles Camsell and others had collected Eskimo

¹⁸SC, Stefansson Diary, 21 April 1908.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰AMNH, file 719A. VS to Bumpus, 21 April 1908.
materials for the Museum in the course of explorations in Eskimo country between 1882 and 1906. However, by 1908, Brock was embarking on a long range programme to recruit a specialized staff expressly to work in Canadian ethnology and archeology for the Survey. The building of the Victoria Memorial Museum encouraged such enterprises. As Brock expressed his concern,

In the new Museum one of the most popular sections is likely to be the ethnological exhibit. Very little investigation has been made in Canada of the native races, and what has been done has mostly been under the auspices of foreign institutions. The opportunities for such studies are fast disappearing. Under advancing settlement and rapid development of the country, the native is disappearing, or coming under the influence of the white man's civilization. The older people who are familiar with the folk lore or traditions of the tribe are dying off, and the rising generation under the changed conditions is acquiring a totally different education.

If the information concerning the native races is ever to be secured and preserved, action must be taken very soon, or it will be too late. It is a duty we owe to the Canada of the future to see that such material is saved."

---

21 Morris Zaslow, "The Survey Re-organized", [Draft of Chapter 14], The History of the Geological Survey of Canada [tentative title], pp. n-46 to n-54. Ethnographers before the twentieth century were usually involved in some non-anthropological profession--geology, law, the military, government administration, missionary activity. They may not have been ethnographers in our modern understanding of the term, but they were dedicated individuals who believed it their duty to record, as much as possible, information regarding native people. R.P. Rohmer, The Ethnography of Franz Boas, (Chicago, 1969), pp. XXIV-XXV.

22 Canada, Geological Survey of Canada, Summary Report, 1908-09, p. 34.
Stefansson's rather small-scale work on behalf of the Survey was to be an intensification and broadening of a crusade begun almost three decades before.

According to Stefansson, Brock assured him that there would be no problem in advancing funds as long as the work were kept in the public's eye. Publish any results as quickly as possible, said Brock, and then he would approach the government to argue that "we [the Geological Survey] have begun the work; now we need the money to continue it. He says he can get $10 to continue the thing more easily than $1 to begin a new work." 23 Given the times and the nature of parliamentary government, such strategy on the part of an ambitious and experienced bureaucrat was sound—and the lesson was not lost upon Stefansson.

Bumpus, the American Museum's Director, considered the offer of co-operation attractive, 24 and gave the arrangement between its representative and the Geological Survey his approval. The expedition was to receive $500 from the Survey, $200 immediately and $300 upon the submission of the final report to Brock. 25 To receive the balance of $300, Stefansson quickly submitted a preliminary report based

23 AMNH, file 719A, VS to Bumpus, 21 April 1908.
24 AMNH, file 719A, Bumpus to VS, 25 April 1908.
25 AMNH, file 719A, Brock to VS, 16 May 1908.
largely on his earlier expedition.

Almost at once Stefansson was in the process of changing the plans for the expedition—within a month or so of having had them accepted by all parties concerned. He had now grown certain that his aims could not be accomplished in a single year; good work could hardly be done in all areas in so short a time. Rather than return to civilization in the autumn of 1909, Stefansson concluded that it would be best to extend the expedition into 1910. Furthermore, as much as he wanted to study the Eskimo of far-off Victoria Land, he realized that his present means were insufficient, and would be better spent in the study of the "ethnologically and zoologically little-known Colville District" to the west. \(^\text{26}\) Since he needed the cash to purchase supplies for a second year in the North, \(^\text{27}\) the commander wondered whether the Museum would support and provision the endeavour for a second year, and furnish an additional $1,000. \(^\text{28}\) The Museum, naturally, was very reluctant to commit itself further to an individual who had not yet stirred from southern Canada. The reply was cautious, pointing out that the Museum could not pledge itself so far in advance, but would give the request "careful consideration" on the basis of favourable progress

\(^{26}\) AMNH, file 719A, VS to Bumpus, 17 April 1908.

\(^{27}\) AMNH, file 719A, Brock to VS, 16 May 1908.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
reports in the future. Stefansson took this vague response as a positive endorsement to proceed with his revised scheme and devote the first year entirely to the Colville area; possibly he may have been given private assurances to that effect. In any case, this conformed with the original plan in which the Colville district had been stipulated as one of the primary areas for investigation. By May, 1908, the plan had changed accordingly, and Victoria Land would have to wait its turn. That particular excursion would also depend on the Museum's assessment of Stefansson's work. Stefansson hoped his newly-recruited associate, R.M. Anderson, would concur in this change of plans.

*     *     *

A third proposed object for the expedition had been to make an extensive collection of zoological material: mammals, birds, reptiles. It was for this purpose that Rudolph Martin Anderson, a fellow student at Iowa, was

29 AMNH, file 719A. Bumpus to VS, 18 April 1908.

30 See pp. 103-04.

31 Rudolph Martin Anderson was born at Decorah, Iowa in 1876. The University of Iowa awarded him a B.Ph. in 1903; he was an assistant in zoology there from 1901 to 1906. He and Stefansson were contemporaries at the University of Iowa, but only casual acquaintances apparently. Nevertheless, Stefansson considered him "an old Iowa State classmate." Stefansson, Discovery, p. 101. In 1906 he received his Ph.D.
eventually appointed by the American Museum after some astute and interesting manoeuvring by Stefansson. The changing relationship between the two men was to be a critical factor in Stefansson's Canadian career in later years.

Anderson was not happy as an assistant commandant at Blees Military Academy, for he could devote little time to teaching and none to field work in his academic specialty, zoology. He was increasingly dissatisfied with military life and he longed to resume research in mammalogy and ornithology. The opportunity came to change his status and assume an inspiring and challenging career when he read of Stefansson's plans. Anderson contacted his former acquaintance inquiring about the possibilities of his going North too.

Initially, Stefansson was skeptical about being accompanied by another person. Yet he could see many

with a dissertation on "Birds of Iowa." In 1898 he joined the 52nd Iowa Infantry for service in the Spanish-American War. He was a member of the Iowa National Guard from 1898 to 1905 and from 1906 to 1908 a member of the Missouri National Guard and assistant commandant at Blees Military Academy, Macon, Missouri.

32 PAC, RMA/vol. 1, Frank M. Chapman [curator of birds, American Museum of Natural History] to Anderson, 26 February 1908.

33 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 101.

34 "In the work of an ethnologist, a companion (tho a pleasure) is a hindrance in these ways--[an Eskimo] family that can house one man will not be able to house two", and, Stefansson continued, "(most important) there is a temptation to talk English when one of my chief aims is the mastering of Eskimo...." PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 8 February 1908.
advantages in someone like Anderson coming along. Anderson's presence, among other things, would add an aura of professionalism to an expedition which appeared somewhat lacking in this regard. Also, Anderson, who was "admirably adapted to do well work which I could do only poorly," would be able to use his training and expertise to produce a truly representative collection of important specimens. The mere fact of having such a well qualified man as Anderson as his associate, Stefansson hoped, would produce a "conspicuously successful trip." Minor doubts were pushed aside. In a letter to Anderson he indicated the Museum might be persuaded to approve Anderson's going along if his presence would not mean additional expense and told Anderson not to be upset at foregoing a salary; Stefansson was in the same situation, and in the long run, the trip might turn out to be of "money value" to both of them, and besides,

The whole experience will be a bully one. The trip ...is not dangerous nor filled with remarkable hardships. As you may know, I spent last winter alone with the Eskimos and know what I'm talking about. I'll go back to it as one might return to Germany for a winter at Heidelberg.

Stefansson began preparing the groundwork to secure Anderson's appointment as his travelling companion by contacting Frank

35 Ibid.
36 PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 28 February 1908.
37 PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 8 February 1908.
M. Chapman, the Museum's curator of birds. At the same time, he gained a hold on Anderson.

The time was opportune. The American Museum happened to be considering the possibility of adding a field agent to its staff.\textsuperscript{38} Unfortunately, Chapman wanted to use the new slot to man an expedition to South America but Stefansson threw his personal influence with the Museum's executive to have the position allocated to his expedition. He convinced the Museum, he told Anderson, that sending Anderson on a northern venture would be cheaper than appointing someone to the South American project, and that Anderson's addition to the Arctic expedition would result in the Museum securing one of the world's first and finest Arctic collections. In view of the already large South American collection, the Museum agreed to give priority to the northlands.\textsuperscript{39} Bumpus, the director of the Museum, already on exceptionally good terms with his newly-found ethnographer, made the final decision in favour of the change.

For a moment, matters became complicated; Anderson suddenly became intrigued by the idea of engaging in a South American venture and joining the staff of the American Museum of Natural History and lost his enthusiasm for the Arctic project.

\textsuperscript{38}PAC, RMA/1, Chapman to Anderson, 26 February 1908.

\textsuperscript{39}PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 11 March 1908.
for the "[Arctic expedition] does not exactly appeal to me..." But he was quickly brought back by Stefansson, who implied that Anderson's only hope of joining the American Museum, was to go to the Arctic with Stefansson, and prove his worth there:

The Museum has for sometime contemplated adding to its staff a 'field representative' or 'field agent' in zoology, but they have intended choosing for that position only a man who seemed to them likely to be a suitable man not only to do field work but to superintend the doing of such work by others--in other words, they intend that this field agent shall become, as soon as they are clear on the question of his personal fitness, a superintendent of exploration, or the head of a sub-department. Your recommendations are such that they are led to consider you the most promising candidate in view for this position; if you elect to go north they will not only consider your working towards that position but you will be (I understand) the only candidate working for it and it is not a question of competing for it merely one of 'making good'--in other words of keeping from being fired--in other words still, you have as good as got the job as soon as you decide to try for it.

To join Stefansson's expedition, according to Stefansson's interpretation of the Museum's attitude, in the long run would assure Anderson of a prestigious, and financially rewarding position. To remind Anderson that the northern

---

40 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Mae Belle Allstrand [his future wife], 3 March 1908.

41 PAC, RMA/1, file 719A. VS to Anderson, 10 March 1908. This was basically the same proposition Bumpus conveyed to Anderson, AMNH, Bumpus to Anderson, 25 April 1908.

42 PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 10 March 1908.
expedition was not without its attractions, Stefansson pointed out to Anderson that "you would have to go many times to South America before your work would command the public attention that the north trip would."\textsuperscript{43}

With such a carrot dangled before him--the position with the American Museum--and Stefansson's insinuation that it depended on Anderson's going North--Anderson forgot about the South American trip. Confiding to his future wife, Anderson echoed Stefansson's assertion that "one good Arctic trip will give a scientific man more standing than four or five trips to South America."\textsuperscript{44} Anderson may have been a quiet unassuming individual--reserved, "talking but little and thinking a lot", according to C.C. Nutting\textsuperscript{45}--but he was just as eager as Stefansson to "make good" and make a name for himself--even if it meant using Stefansson to do it.

He was bound to "make good" he came to believe, provided he returned home safely, "...to be successful, if for no other reason, one has to come back....", he reassured his future wife.\textsuperscript{46} The simple act of returning would belie all the myths and erroneous assumptions about the North which had been conjured up by imaginative reporters. He assured

\textsuperscript{43}PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 28 February 1908.

\textsuperscript{44}PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Mae Belle Allstrand, 21 March 1908.

\textsuperscript{45}AMNH, file 262B. C.C, Nutting to Bumpus, 7 March 1908.

\textsuperscript{46}PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 5 May 1908.
his apprehensive fiancée, much as Stefansson had assured him, that the trip would present no hazards. In the long run, he might even have greater success in the field than his commander:

Although we may not succeed in reaching the grounds we wish to, I do not think the trip can be a failure altogether as I feel certain that the zoological results of my part of the work can not help but bring something, as the north coast has been practically unworked in that line. I have that advantage over a man who is simply exploring and travelling. Then, if we have to do some spectacular 'stunts' we shall have that much more to talk about.47

This, probably, was the greatest chance of his career:

All this territory has been practically untouched in my line, and very little by anybody, and a 'scoop' counts for as much in scientific as in newspaper work--for the first writer or first authority on a subject has a great advantage in the way of publication.48

Such a statement might be anticipated from Stefansson,49 but here they were the words of his "silent" partner, who was later to denounce his commander for holding similar aspirations. A cynic might be pardoned for thinking that Anderson's values were the same as Stefansson's, and that he would have behaved much as Stefansson did if he had had Stefansson's talent.50 But at this point in his career Anderson was basking

47 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 5 May 1908.
48 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 15 October 1908.
49 See p. 282.
50 See p. 218.
in the "reflected glory" of his association with Stefansson. The expedition was receiving good coverage in the papers, mainly because of the free rein given to reporters' imaginations. Like Stefansson, Anderson was not going to allow any opportunity to become famous slip through his hands.

In addition, Anderson, like Stefansson, hoped to realize something from the publication of magazine stories when he returned. Stefansson had first rights of publication, by the agreement with the American Museum; but Anderson could publish anything he wanted, anywhere, and at will, after that. All he had to do, he told his future wife, was simply take good pictures of musk-oxen, caribou, or polar bears, and write a short narrative, for "anything with 'the lure of the magnetic north' about it finds a ready sale nowadays."

51 PAC, RMA/70, Anderson to Mamie Anderson [his sister], 30 April 1908.

52 Ibid.

53 Anderson, who also entered the field without salary, received similar rights to Stefansson regarding the publication of a narrative of his part of the expedition. However, Stefansson objected that his own contract to furnish Harper's and Brothers with a popular account of the expedition held priority over any other similar rights. Anderson, Stefansson felt, could only be authorized to dispose of his account in ways that did not conflict with Stefansson's rights. AMNH, file 719A. Stefansson to Bumpus, 14 April 1908. The Museum retreated from the internal differences within the Expedition and simply left it to the commander to settle the question of the priority of publications with Anderson. AMNH, file 719A. Bumpus to Stefansson, 14 April 1908. There was no trouble over this; Anderson accepted Stefansson's first right to publication. PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 19 April, 1909. The matter of publications was to become touchy, later in another context, during the 1913-18 Expedition.

54 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 19 April 1908.
The strong similarity between the aspirations of both men helps to explain why they got along so well on their first expedition. Anderson's diffidence was the perfect foil for Stefansson's ego. On a number of occasions Anderson received verbal dressings down by his commander, but he always managed to shrug them off. For example, when Anderson refused to agree that the Eskimo were the "chosen people" he was told by Stefansson that he "[did] not properly appreciate the beauties of the communistic life"; that "after all he [Stefansson] has told me I have adopted the point of view taken by missionaries, travellers, and other illiterate people." Anderson admitted he might have been provoked by such scathing remarks had he been carrying a chip on his shoulders, but he was able to cope with such an overbearing nature by holding his tongue and temper--no doubt with the American Museum's position always before his eyes. That he already was cynical about his associate appears in a letter just after they arrived in the Arctic:

One point of disagreement is that he considers any attention to cleanliness, hygiene and camp sanitation as "military fads." If you have read his articles in Harpers you may have noticed that there is only one really great Arctic and Eskimo authority--who has learned more in one year than all previous explorers combined. But I understand

55 PAC, RMA, Diary, 27 July 1908.

56 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 29 August 1908.
the situation and don't worry much about it. 57

Still, the relationship remained relatively smooth for four years. Any other attitude on Anderson's part might well have torn the two-man expedition apart. Yet in the 1913-18 Expedition, when the American Museum job was no longer available and Anderson had secured one with the Geological Survey of Canada, harmony between the two men was quickly and irreparably destroyed.

* * *

In just six months from his return from the Anglo-American Polar Expedition, and after some shrewd, successful bargaining, Stefansson was ready to go North again. Anderson met the commander in Toronto in April 1908, where he was told about the expedition's newest function and was made responsible for learning the fine points of setting up Meteorological stations. Then the two embarked on their trip, travelling to Winnipeg, Edmonton and Athabaska Landing, reaching Fort McPherson by early July. They had reached their destination by employing a number of transportation modes; rail, stern-wheeler, scow and whaleboat. According to Stefansson their equipment was as simple as possible:

57 PAC, RMA/70, Anderson to Mamie Anderson, 12 August 1908.
two identical cameras and film supply; two special rifles and 1000 rounds of ammunition; half a dozen "ordinary" rifles and shotguns and ammunition, for the use of the Eskimos; two field glasses; pens, pencils, paper and notebooks; two silk tents; tobacco for their Eskimo employees; aluminum cooking utensils; "and very little else". The outfit weighed less than a ton but was, according to Stefansson in 1913, all that was needed. As for food: "we considered that carrying food to the Arctic was carrying coal to Newcastle."\(^{58}\) En route they had also successfully set up the meteorological stations in accordance with their agreement with Stupart's Meteorological Service of Canada and discharged that commitment.

As soon as the expedition was safely North, Stefansson formally announced that he was going to stay two years "and shall from now on [9 July 1908] go ahead with that purpose in view";\(^{59}\) earlier he had hinted such a possibility might arise if he, as the man on the spot, found such a move were necessary, but Stefansson had already made up his mind long before they had left Toronto.\(^{60}\) Though aware that the Museum could not officially pledge itself so far in advance, he felt

---


\(^{59}\) AMNH, file 719A. VS to Bumpus, 9 July 1908.

\(^{60}\) See p. 91.
he had Bumpus' "personal opinion the Museum would probably
continue to support for another year if I decided when on
the ground that a second year's work would be advisable."61
With little fuss, support for a second year was indeed granted,
and the ease of his victory gave the commander a false sense
of security, a feeling he could fall back on his benefactors
again and again if he so wished. This was "Brock's law" in
action: it was easier to obtain $10 to continue an enterprise
than $1 to begin one.62

In retrospect, this was a wise decision, though the
methods by which approval was secured for it, and the casual
assumptions about how the expedition would proceed left much
to be desired. In view of the ambitious plan of the expedition,
not even one feature could be accomplished satisfactorily in
the original one year time limit, even under perfect conditions.
And this was not to be the case; from the outset Stefansson
was plagued by a host of minor, irksome, problems which demanded
much time and energy, and, eventually, necessitated a third
year in the North.

These problems ranged from an immediate shortage of

61AMNH, file 719A. VS to Bumpus, 11 August 1908.

62See above, p. 90.
cash owing to the unexpected increase of freight rates since his last trip North, to a refusal on the part of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police to co-operate in his schemes. The Police, custodian's of the order, good government, and well-being of the northland's inhabitants, were annoyed that such a flimsy "expedition" as Stefansson's had been allowed to enter the country in the first place. If Staff Sgt. Fitzgerald of the Herschel Island detachment had had his way, no one would be allowed into the country unless he had one year's supply of provisions, a procedure followed during the Yukon gold rush. Fitzgerald would have turned the party back had he the authority: "Such men as Stefansson claim that they can live on the country. They can[,] by someone else supplying the food. All these people are a drain on our supplies[.]. It is impossible to refuse a white man if he is short of food...." It appears that Stefansson was again willing "to live off the country" and not by hunting alone.

While in the Arctic, Stefansson took full advantage of the services of the Police, as well as missionaries and made only token recognition of their work and importance, then pilloried them as a set of individuals who, in reality, knew nothing about the North and were constantly impeding the

63 AMNH, file 719A. VS to Bumpus, 4 June 1908.

pursuit of scientific knowledge. The "match incident" is a case in point.

Fitzgerald, in all sincerity, had refused Stefansson's party matches to discourage a possible tragedy, but the explorer, once he had secured the matches from other sources, turned the incident around to his advantage: "...we had not come north to study the habits of the police at Herschel Island...." The match incident was blown out of all proportion, mainly to make good copy and intriguing reading. Stefansson later admitted that it was necessary, from a 'commercial' standpoint, "to prod [up] a missionary now and then when things get too quiet."  

In the match incident it would be the Police who were

65 Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 103-04; See also Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, pp. 37-41, which includes his views on the influence of the missionaries and Christianity, as well as the Police.

66 PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 8 February 1914. Stefansson would later reveal, taking missionaries and others to task was necessary for professional reasons. It was desirable from a monetary standpoint as well, if a publisher "can hoodwink the public", the "man who buys the book because he thinks I am 'great'." Even though such an image of greatness was, in Stefansson's words, "rot". It was in Stefansson's financial interest, as well as other explorers', to let the publisher take liberties in publicity matters, and for himself to remain "mum and not give the game away". "...Amundsen is the most unblushed advertizer of the lot. He has press agents and deliberately laid plans that out Herod Herod."  Ibid.
being prodded, even though Fitzgerald was merely carrying out his duty and thinking of the safety of the newcomers, Stefansson and Anderson. Stefansson had managed to raise some dust out of a rather mundane incident. The police (and the missionaries) would only have been human if they had not taken too kindly to the author of such opinions, and it appears that they were later bitter about the treatment accorded them.67

The police were not the only providers of food, for Stefansson had adopted the Eskimos' eating habits, as well as their customs of storing food. Whenever his party cooked food the Eskimos flocked to his tent and ate heartily. The thing to do when out of food, he told Anderson, was to reciprocate; Eskimo hospitality would suffice: "Stefansson says one must do the same as they do—when one is hungry, go to some native's tent, squat down, and wait until he gives you a 'hand-out'."68 Anderson made only light mention of

---

67 For an example of how one missionary at least, the Reverend C.E. Whittaker, reacted to Stefansson's opinions, see p. 204, footnote 82. The Police, for their part, usually kept private opinions out of their official reports, but an Arctic traveller in the 1920's recounted that they too, disliked Stefansson's portrayal. See p. 443, footnote #89. Also, pp. 444 ff.

68 PAC, RMA, Diary, 26 July 1908. Stefansson appears to have attached himself to a wealthy Eskimo widow, Pannigabluk—reportedly his common-law wife [See Georgina Stefansson, "My Grandfather, Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson", North, VIII (July-August, 1961), p. 25], although Stefansson would never acknowledge the fact—so that his party would have use of her sewing and cooking talents as well as her personal effects, notably a whaleboat. PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Miss Allstrand, 29 August 1909.
Stefansson's methods at this time and only in private and intimate letters. Much later, when relations between the two had reached the breaking point, Anderson's perspective had changed radically. Stefansson could never, according to Anderson (and the contemporary evidence) live off the country as he had detailed it in published accounts:

Mr. Stefansson himself started off in the fall of 1908 (about 20th of October), to try to winter with the Colville River Eskimos, having two supposedly good Eskimo hunters working for him but got starved out of the country before Christmas, and had to retreat to Point Barrow, where he spent most of the winter as the guest of the whaling station, government school teacher, and missionary finding the study of Eskimo linguistics more easy and practicable than "living on the country." 69

Yet Stefansson's dependence on the natives and whites and his preoccupation with hand-to-mouth existence, against which he himself complained incessantly, 70 meant that he was

---

69 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to G.J. Desbarats [Deputy Minister of the Department of Naval Service], 13 May 1914. Naturally, this is how Anderson "perceived" the situation. Although Anderson's statement is harsh, it is valid and accurate to a point. Even Stefansson in his My Life With the Eskimo, pp. 83-86, conceded this point, stating that he had to withdraw from the region in question "on account of the insufficiency of the food supply", to use Stefansson's words, and did spend the winter with whites. Stefansson made no additional comments on this particular episode. However, Anderson, sharing a different scientific perspective, was unjust in his comment on Stefansson's invaluable study of Eskimo linguistics and appeared unable to appreciate this worthwhile endeavour.

70 See, AMNH, file 719C. VS to Bumpus, 6 December 1910! Also SC, Stefansson Diary, entries for 28 October 1908, 8 January 1910, 29 January 1910, 26 November 1910.
not able to do as much scientific investigation as he would have liked. In actual fact, though, he was gaining more and more experience with the northland and its people, collecting artifacts for his principals, recording native folk-lore and pursuing linguistic studies. One gets the impression that either Stefansson may have been oblivious to these achievements—although this is unlikely—or that he may not have considered them important in themselves. Stefansson, in search of something which would distinguish him,⁷¹ may have despaired at his inability to reach the fabled people of Victoria Land because of the food problem. As Stefansson himself confessed in his diary:

The continual nervous strain of a hand-to-mouth existence, where there is not even the shelter of a poorhouse in case of failure, has a telling and cumulative effect. Without in the least relinquishing my hopes of many more years of arctic work, I continually feel more strongly the desire to be so well equipt in future that I shall have at least a years supply of food somewhere waiting me to tide me over a season of failure. Just knowing of such a reserve if one never had the comfort of a mouthful of it to vary one's diet, would lessen by half the strain of the winter. This is a hard country for a hungry man.⁷²

All these experiences, however, would contribute to his methods in organizing the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18, and making certain that it was well-provisioned, though Stefansson

⁷¹See p. 58.

⁷²SC, Stefansson Diary, 26 November 1910.
never acknowledged that this was done for his personal wish.

The most important, though never well-publicized, "obstacle" in Stefansson's path, was the Museum's refusal to extend its support beyond the first two years. Although the Museum had given him a wide rein, by the winter of 1909-10 they were growing disturbed at what they considered the poor results of the first two years. The time spent with the local Eskimos has proved invaluable, but Stefansson had not achieved one of his main goals: the investigation of the Victoria Land Eskimos. Not only that, but the Museum either anticipated or surmised that he would soon approach them for a third year's additional support.

For his part, Stefansson was confident that the Museum would finance the expedition for another year. He felt certain that "even our small achievements to date come well above the limits set as a possible...minimum", and that only a general change of policy could prevent the Museum from providing the necessary credit. 73 If however, the Museum did not lend them additional financial assistance, both Stefansson and Anderson would, in all likelihood continue in the field, "as they have no power to recall us or direct our movements." 74

73SC, Stefansson Diary, 23 November 1909.

74Ibid.
In the meantime Stefansson would continue using the credit of the American Museum to pay additional bills "in the hope that they approve our plans, having merely a verbal understanding with the [whaling] captains that a refusal to honor drafts is possible and that I shall endeavour to make them good personally."\textsuperscript{75} Stefansson felt certain that matters would work out to his satisfaction.

However, the Museum, by April, 1910, decided to withdraw before it was too late and to recall Stefansson and Anderson "as they had been in the field now for about three years, at a cost of more than $4,000, and with practically no results."\textsuperscript{76} As early as the previous November, based on reports and results to date, Clark Wissler expressed serious doubts to his superior about Stefansson and the expedition. He was certain that little would come of it, save the collections. Having talked with other ethnologists he had come away with "a poor opinion of [Stefansson's] ethnological results."\textsuperscript{77} Wissler was not willing for the Museum to become obligated to Stefansson "any more than can be helped; at least until we have some tangible evidence of his worth."\textsuperscript{78} Stefansson's reports were vague and inconclusive and Wissler criticized the adventurer for being superficial, "satisfied

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} AMNH, file 719C. Memorandum [unsigned], 15 April 1910.

\textsuperscript{77} AMNH, file 719B. Wissler to Bumpus, n.d. [received 17 November 1909].

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
to stop with the general impression, just the point where our real field work should begin," 79 a criticism that would be levelled again and again at Stefansson over the years.

The ultimate decision to discontinue support was taken by the Museum after it received a discouraging note from Anderson, the other half of the expedition, indicating he would prefer to quit the North as soon as it was convenient. Anderson pointed to a fundamental conflict of scholarly interest:

From a personal standpoint, I must admit that the results of the past two years have been unsatisfactory to me. 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, unfavorable to 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 labor for bare living. Two winters have been endured in the hope of making up for lost time in the short summer harvest season, and the previous summer months sacrificed in the continual rush of moving. Collecting work on the move is difficult and usually unfruitful, and, at best, only skims the ground superficially. While this method of exploration may demonstrate that a white man can live where an Indian or Eskimo can and perhaps endure as much, the corollary seems to be that they are aborigines not able to accomplish much more than a bare living, and a white

79 Ibid. It should be noted that at the time no one could be sure of the value of Stefansson's work. The field reports were considered unsatisfactory and they had not received any artifacts. The Museum's opinions may have been premature, but they were also sorely pressed for funds. Le Bourdais later stated that the Museum gained over 20,000 specimens from Stefansson and Anderson's endeavours, with a market value (1963) of over $40,000, not to mention the obvious ethnological and zoological information. Le Bourdais, p. 51.
man cannot be expected to do much scientific work under similar conditions.\textsuperscript{80}

Anderson's memo did much to persuade the American Museum to drop the project.

Anderson was right in his assessment as far as it went. While most kinds of scientific work—like his own—require a man to remain relatively stationary and to devote himself wholly to one activity, a field ethnologist, like Stefansson, was best served by living with, moving with, and sharing the experiences of the people he studied. Anderson acknowledged this at the time, but the different approaches of each man towards the execution of scientific work would lead to discord in the field during the expedition of 1913-18. In 1909-10 the American Museum took serious note of Anderson's position.

The Museum fully understood the difficulties that had been encountered, but they could not in good conscience spend more money on an endeavour that had not provided fruitful results;\textsuperscript{81} to them money was needed elsewhere, particularly for South America and Africa.\textsuperscript{82} Such being the case, the Museum was obliged to withdraw its support, although both members were perfectly free to stay on in the Arctic at their

\textsuperscript{80}\textsc{PAC, RMA/1, Anderson to Bumpus, 15 November 1909.}

\textsuperscript{81}\textsc{AMNH, file 719C. Bumpus to Anderson, 13 May 1910.}

\textsuperscript{82}\textsc{AMNH, file 719D. Osborn, [President of the Museum] to VS, 6 January 1911.}
own expense. 83 Not until May of the following year (1910) were the formal instructions sent out to the expedition. Anderson received his notice three months later, almost to the day, 84 but Stefansson apparently did not get wind of the decision until early December of that year, 85 too late to do anything.

Stefansson, naturally, was shaken upon receipt of the Museum's decision, but he would not have returned even if he had received the notice earlier. 86 The news came in the first week of December 1910. Four months earlier, after two years of frustration and finally getting together the supplies necessary to carry out his investigations, 87 Stefansson discovered his "gold mine", the natives of Victoria Land. With the prospects for success now looking so bright, Stefansson would have stayed in the Arctic as a "cabin boy" rather than leave: "It was more than I could stand for, to hang around in destitution and inability to move for two years and then come home when at last I had all the tools [the natives of Victoria Land] in my hands and fair weather for the work we came to do." 88

83 AMNH, file 719C. Bumpus to VS, 13 May 1910.
84 AMNH, file 719C. Anderson to Bumpus, 13 August 1910.
85 AMNH, file 719C. VS to Bumpus, 6 December 1910.
86 SC, Blond Eskimo file, VS to Mr. Rood, 4 December 1910. See also pp.
87 AMNH, file 719C. VS to Bumpus, 6 December 1910.
88 SC, Blond Eskimo file, VS to Mr. Rood, 4 December 1910.
Nor would Anderson, who had previously indicated that he wanted to return south, leave his commander in the lurch without knowing his whereabouts. He felt duty bound to stay even against his better judgement.\textsuperscript{89} In fact, Stefansson attributed the Museum's eventual re-instatement of the project and the expedition's chance to "make good", to Anderson's stand,\textsuperscript{90} which enabled the party to bring to the world some astonishing and intriguing news.

\*
\*
\*

"AMERICAN EXPLORER DISCOVERS LOST TRIBE OF WHITES, DESCENDANTS OF LEIF ERIKSSON." So ran the headline of the Seattle Daily Times for September 9, 1912. In essence, the world was told that Stefansson had discovered a "tribe of white people" who were "purely of Norwegian origin", remnants of the Norse Greenland colony which had disappeared in the fifteenth century.

Between May and August 1910, Stefansson had encountered a new and intriguing group of Eskimos who appeared to have the physical characteristics of Europeans "especially in the manner of beards, which are uniformly blonde, some even red. I have seen none with blonde hair, but Captain Mogg and others who have wintered north of the Kan-hirg-mi-ut report hair dark brown and blue eyes."\textsuperscript{91} This "European appearance"

\textsuperscript{89} AMNH, file 719C. Anderson to Bumpus, 13 August 1910.
\textsuperscript{90} PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 18 June 1912.
\textsuperscript{91} AMNH, file 719C. VS to Bumpus, 12 August 1910.
according to Stefansson, might be due to climate "or other physical cause than mixture of white blood", but he toyed with the idea that some survivors of Franklin's expedition might have assimilated with the Eskimo. Or—and this became increasingly attractive to Stefansson—perhaps the characteristics of the Victoria Land people were the result of the colony of Greenlanders that had disappeared in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. 

Earlier, in an article in 1906, Stefansson had concluded that the Greenlanders had been wiped out, and few, if any, had been assimilated. 

Through the remainder of his life Stefansson denied he had put forth any such exclusive explanation for the physical characteristics of these Eskimos. He did suggest that while "there is no reason for insisting now or ever that the 'Blonde Eskimos' of Victoria Land are descended from the Scandinavian colonists of Greenland, but looking at it historically or geographically there is no reason why they might not be." To this view he adhered until his death.

In fact, in public he disclaimed any connection with

---

92 Ibid. It is interesting to note that months before he had actually met these Eskimos of Victoria Land, he had reflected on the verbal reports that their complexion and hair were lighter than other Eskimos and considered it "entirely out of the way" that this phenomena could be explained by an admixture of white blood introduced in the 19th century. SC, Stefansson Diary, 25 February 1909.

93 See above p. 43.

94 Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, p. 200.
the "Blond Eskimo" stories, claiming that they were "half-truths, non-malicious fiction, and sheer nonsense"\textsuperscript{95}, the product of over-imaginative writing on the part of J.J. Underwood of the \textit{Seattle Daily Times}. In private, however, the ethnologist was somewhat gleeful that the whole affair was raising quite some dust in academic circles around the world, that in Sweden and Germany "our work has caused more popular interest than the discovery of the North Pole--which is by no means true of America, however."\textsuperscript{96} In any case, the attention finally being paid the expedition was well deserved:

It is well to be modest in public, but privately we needn't be so diffident. If we had been as much behind the scene in other exploits as we have been in our own we might think that what credit we are getting is [as] well earned as it is in a good half of the other cases.\textsuperscript{97}

Stefansson merely warned Anderson to refuse any newspaper interviews which might violate his agreement with Harper's; otherwise the only limit in talking to reporters should be the adventurers' own ideas of "good taste."\textsuperscript{98} Later he suggested that although Anderson "did not see the two blondest groups--those of Prince Albert Sound and near Pt. Williams", as long as each adhered to the facts--as determined by Stefansson--there would be no fear of contradicting one

\textsuperscript{95}Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{96}PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 13 October 1912.

\textsuperscript{97}PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 16 June 1912.

\textsuperscript{98}\textit{Ibid.}
another. Anderson could only follow his commander's directives.

Stefansson later was extremely disturbed by the criticism leveled at him by two of the most respected polar explorers, Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen. Nansen considered Stefansson another Dr. Cook, another trickster, while Amundsen was most violent in his characterization of Stefansson, calling his alleged conclusions "palpable nonsense" and an "amusing figment of the imagination." It was about this time that two camps appeared, one supporting Stefansson as an honest and dedicated scientist, the other condemning him as a mere popularizer and part-time charlatan.

To some degree, Stefansson had no one but himself to credit or blame for this publicity and notoriety. Some of his findings in connection with the Victoria Land Eskimos were published in the New York Times in the fall of 1911. Moreover, he wrote a lengthy letter to Professor James Mavor on December 12, 1910, parts of which eventually appeared in the widely-read London Times of August 13, 1912, which did much to place Stefansson in an unfavorable light. In

---

99 PAC, RMA/1, VS to Anderson, 13 October 1912.

100 Cited in Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 137-38.

101 Ibid.

102 MC, VS to Mavor, 12 December 1910.
the letter to Mavor, Stefansson admitted that his finds might lay him open to the charge of sensationalism. Nevertheless, the only historical event that could possibly explain the high admixture of white and Eskimo blood, that Stefansson believed to be present amongst the Copper Eskimos, was the disappearance of the Greenland colony in the late Middle Ages. In similar correspondence with Bumpus and Wissler, he firmly expressed his belief in their Norse (white) origin. 103 Soon, though, common sense and experience told him that perhaps he had been too rash and foolhardy, that he should modify his beliefs and couch his assertions in more carefully chosen words. No doubt he took Mavor's advice to "avoid sensational conclusions. I am afraid that they do not do very much good." 104 Stefansson's mentor, Mavor, like others, was apprehensive because of Stefansson's limited training in the subject. 105 Whether this assessment of Stefansson's ability was right or wrong, it represented an important and influential segment of opinion.

It is interesting to note that the school which had

103 AMNH, file 719C. VS to Bumpus, 12 August 1910.

104 MC, Mavor to VS, 23 November 1911.

105 MC, John Scott Keltie [Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society], to Mavor, 27 November 1911. For an assessment of Stefansson's professional ability, given the newness of the field, see pp. 128-30.
trained him and in a way sent him on this work, was cool, at times hostile, toward their pupil. Harvard was never very impressed with his professional abilities. In 1912, a senior member of Harvard's Department of Anthropology, Dr. W.C. Farrabee, who knew Stefansson well in his Harvard days, stated categorically that Stefansson "does not enjoy the full confidence of any member of our anthropological faculty." The tone of Farrabee's curt response, which was never expanded upon, seems to indicate that this attitude had existed for some considerable time previously, and was not related solely to the question of the "Blond Eskimos". Despite this professional suspicion, which was to follow him into Canada at a later stage, Stefansson continued, undaunted by his detractors.

One should give some weight, in all Stefansson's endeavours, to his continual concern with making a name for himself. Perhaps Stefansson was over-dramatic or only feeling sorry for himself when on his thirtieth birthday, a crucial one in any man's life, he lamented that in the year just ended "there lie too few and too small accomplishments, too many miscarried plans and imperfectly accomplished purposes." Always gnawing at his conscience was the feeling he had accomplished nothing to show for himself, that people would

106 AMNH, Crockerland File, no. 48. W.C. Farrabee to E.O. Hovey, 27 May 1912.

107 SC, Stefansson Diary, 3 November 1909.
not notice him, or recognize the fruits of his work, or support his research. The news of the Museum's discontinuing its support had been a keen disappointment to a man of Stefansson's make-up, and he might have concluded that one had to sell himself and his work to succeed as well as survive in his profession. From the viewpoint of his future career and credibility his efforts to heighten the impact of his discovery and to achieve recognition may have been hasty and unwise.

Stefansson made the best of his "scoop". He knew he was breaking ground in Eskimo studies, and while he may not have been the best-trained ethnologist, this concerned him little, for he believed that being the first to do something of note would establish his reputation. Stefansson succeeded. Not only did he receive publicity from the controversies generated over his hypothesis, but he won back the support of the American Museum. Clark Wissler, who had not been impressed with the early results of the expedition, was the person responsible for placing the expedition back on the Museum's good books, for he was duly impressed by Stefansson's

---

108 SC, Stefansson Diary, 4 October 1909.

109 E.g. see PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915]; also, pp. 58, 106.

110 Ibid.; see also p. 282.
achievements. 111 Soon after the account of Stefansson's discoveries had received full coverage in the Sunday edition of the New York Times, 112 the Museum, under Henry Fairfield Osborn, decided to appropriate another $1,000 "for the continuation of their work...In addition, to this appropriation, ...the museum stands ready to pay the cost of transportation of any collections which either Mr. Stefansson or Dr. Anderson may send to the museum, and we further stand ready to pay the travelling expense of both...when they return to the States." 113 However, notwithstanding their decision to support Stefansson's efforts, F.A. Lucas, the director of the Museum, wanted to terminate the expedition as quickly as possible. He was of the opinion that "the information and material gained would not be at all commensurate with the labor and the cost of the expedition...I feel that it is much better to do a few things well, than to do many indifferently." Lucas was certain that

111 AMNH, file 719D. Wissler to Hovey, 19 September 1911. Wissler was intrigued by Stefansson's description of the caucasian Coronation Gulf and Victoria Land Eskimos; he expressed his belief at the time "that the only way you can rationally account for [their] presence and number is to assume that a considerable body of Europeans went into the country at the same time." AMNH, Wissler to VS, 21 November 1911.

112 New York Times, 8 October 1911.

the Museum had spread itself too thinly in connection with this Arctic exploit. Osborn, though, impressed by Stefansson, replied that while the expedition was

Somewhat beyond our field and it would have been wiser not to have undertaken it. It has, however, brought the museum a great deal of publicity and promises to bring it some fine collections. I once wrote Mr. Stefansson, but hearing from him that they had decided to go on without pay at their own expense, it seemed the least we could do was continue to provide them for another year. 115

Stefansson and Brock had been right: it would be difficult to stop an enterprise once it had received formal sanction. In the end, the Museum poured out $13,591.16 116 for an expedition that was supposed to cost, at the most, $2,300. This experience, this reversal of fortunes, may have given Stefansson the notion that publicity was the key to success, be it scientific or popular. 117

The question of the so-called "Blond Eskimos" has been frequently raised to challenge Stefansson's scholarly competence. Consequently, since his encounter with the people of Victoria Land in 1910, a number of investigators have tried to solve

114 AMNH, file 719E. Lucas to Osborn, 11 January 1912.

115 AMNH, file 719E. Osborn to Lucas, 23 January 1912.


117 See p. 106.
the puzzle of how far and for what reasons the appearance and
culture of the Copper Eskimo differed considerably from the
Alaskan and Eastern Eskimo. What is necessary at this point
is an evaluation of Stefansson's accomplishments in the light
of present-day knowledge, and, more importantly, to assess his
work in the context of the practice of ethnology at that time.
Admittedly, this involves a slight digression into the realm
of anthropological theory, but such a procedure is needed so
as to make the problem more intelligible.

A number of theories concerning the origin of the
Copper Eskimo have been postulated to account for their
distinctiveness. Some studies placed the original centre of
Eskimo development in the central Canadian Arctic, between
the Mackenzie River and Hudson Bay; there supposedly, had
dwelt inland tribes of "Proto-Eskimos", in some way related
biologically and culturally to the northern American Indian.
These inland tribes eventually spread to the central Arctic
coast and then east and west along it.118

Another school of thought suggests that much of the
Eskimo cultural development took place in the Western Arctic

118 The following represent some of the major contributors
to this school: F. Boas, "Ethnological Problems in Canada"
of Fifth Thule Expedition, Vol. V., Copenhagen, 1929.
and recognizes, quite correctly, the existence of an Asiatic or Alaska-derived Thule culture dating from prehistoric times. This second group sees the distinctiveness of the Copper Eskimo as resulting from a recent advance of inland "Eschato Eskimo" groups to the Coronation Gulf which either supplemented or amalgamated with an older coast culture. Both schools based their positions primarily on cultural and linguistic traits and neither really concerned itself with physical differences.

Stefansson, by contrast, paid very little attention to cultural and linguistic affiliations between Eskimo groups; no one, for that matter, around 1910 knew much about the subject, and although Stefansson wished to follow up this line of investigation he never had the opportunity. He was really taking a stab in the dark when he tried to account for "whiter" physical traits among Victoria Land Eskimos by suggesting that it might be linked to the disappearance of the Greenland Colony, which had reappeared, he believed, in assimilated form on the


120 See pp. 129-30.
banks of Coronation Gulf. Diamond Jenness seems to have one of the most plausible explanations for the physical characteristics of the "Blond Eskimo". From his studies amongst them for the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18), he concluded that any European-like features in this particular group of Eskimos were due to natural causes, such as bleaching that caused the lightness in the hair, and repeated attacks of snow-blindness that led to the occasional light, bluish colour of the eyes. 121 Yet the anomaly is almost impossible to explain.

Stefansson's suggestions implied that there had been an intimate contact, in one fashion or another, between the Eskimos of Greenland and those of Victoria Land, at some point in history; more particularly, he claimed that a large group of Greenland Eskimos—including Icelandic elements—had migrated to the vicinity of Coronation Gulf. If this was the case, then later investigations should be able to find some connections between the Copper Eskimos and those of Greenland. It should be pointed out that while by 1910-11 Stefansson knew something about the Alaskan Eskimo and the

121 Jenness, "Physical Characteristics of the Copper Eskimos", Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition (Ottawa, 1923), vol. XII, p. 3. When Jenness' explanation, which included some "snide" remarks about Stefansson's work, was about to be published, Stefansson took violent exception to it and requested that it be modified. In the process Stefansson further alienated a large segment of the scientists working in Ottawa. See below, Chapter X.
Copper Eskimos, he knew virtually nothing about eastern Eskimos, since he had never studied them at close range.

A modern study\textsuperscript{122} does not support Stefansson's hypothesis. Robert J. McGhee, in his "Copper Eskimo Prehistory", demonstrates that there was a closer relationship between Alaskan and Greenland Eskimos, and very little connection between Copper Eskimos and Greenland or eastern Eskimos. Gene frequencies of the Central Eskimo for example, in certain select Blood Group Systems, were significantly closer to Alaskan than eastern Eskimo.\textsuperscript{123} Cranial measurements showed little divergence between Alaskan and Copper Eskimos;\textsuperscript{124} there appears to be a higher Greenland-Alaska coefficient in the examination of their material culture\textsuperscript{125} either through contacts between these two groups in the areas to the north of the copper Eskimo region, or because of innovations peculiar to the central area that failed to diffuse in easterly and westerly directions.\textsuperscript{126} McGhee contends that Copper Eskimo culture was a derivative of Thule culture, and that the local variations from the Thule culture do not represent an infusion of a non-Thule culture; rather

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., p. 16.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., pp. 20-22.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., p. 42.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{126}Ibid., pp. 46-47.
\end{flushright}
the variations are a response to geological, ecological, and climatic factors. Stefansson's speculations, then, could never stand up to modern scientific scholarship and techniques. One should not be too severe, however, in criticizing an individual's pioneering efforts by applying the standards of modern science.

Yet even against the general level and trends of nineteenth century and the early twentieth century ethnology, Stefansson, perhaps, was not the best qualified person to study these Eskimo groups. In many important respects he had been influenced by the work and professed methodology of Franz Boas, who had done a fair amount of ethnographic work for the American Museum in the 1890's. Boas adopted a three-step plan in his approach to the subject: first, one must examine in minutest detail, the mores, traits, and every-day activities of one particular tribe. To do this a field investigator should learn the language of the group he is examining and, ideally, keep his notes and records in that language to prevent distortion. In addition to this study of the cultural environment, the investigator should use archeological techniques as well as becoming totally familiar with the physical environment and

---

127 Ibid., pp. 156-81.

the subject's relationship to it. 129 Stefansson followed this first step by very thoroughly recording the daily life and folkways, learning the native language, gaining an understanding of his environment.

The next step was to investigate a number of nearby tribes within a geographically small area to trace the history of the growth of ideas and transmission of customs; in essence this entailed collecting museum specimens and folktales, and investigating native languages within a small area. 130 Stefansson did little in this respect vis à vis neighbouring Eskimo tribes in the Coronation Gulf-Victoria Land region. He would have liked to study comparative linguistics and comparative mythology, but this was beyond the scope and resources of his 1908-12 expedition since the Museum had decided to withdraw support. 131

These first two steps were necessary for the final stage which most ethnologists recognized: a careful search for universal laws of cultural development, the discovery of "psychic" laws governing the growth and transmission of ideas of all mankind. 132 This was one of Stefansson's goals but he realized in 1912 that he was not in a position to

129 Ibid., p. xxi.
130 Ibid., p. xxii.
131 SC, Stefansson Diary, 13 June 1912.
132 Ronald and Evelyn Rohner, p. xxii.
achieve this unless certain conditions were met:

I have no ambition to make all knowledge my province --except so far as to allow any intelligent interest in all progress; I do not want even to make all ethnology my province, but the archeology and ethnology of all America is probably thoroly woven into one whole, and it would be a fine thing to have the money that would enable one to give the necessary time to the study of the results others gain in every part of our continent--then I might be able to see the bearing of my own work, the meaning in relation to the whole phenomena which now stand isolated. Not only could I then profit by the work of others, but others would be more likely to profit by my work.133

Stefansson was more ethnographer than ethnologist at this stage, and he knew that he had just scratched the surface. He had been treading on thin ice, for the simple reason that he was forsaking his ethnological pursuits in favour of playing the anthropologist. His collection of word lists, folk tales, descriptions of Eskimo life, and the like--incomplete as it may have been--was impressive and within the province of his early training. But, it is likely that physical anthropology and ethnogeny, into which he was now venturing, were another matter. Even by contemporary standards much more work was required on his part. It was for these reasons that Stefansson wanted adequate backing and recogni-
tion to carry on work in the North and make it his own preserve. Yet, ironically, by the start of the 1913 expedition his ethnological desires were to become secondary.

133SC, Stefansson Diary, 5 June 1912.
With a view to following up and rounding out his investigation, and to capitalize on the publicity given his work, Stefansson felt he must return South to civilization. Not only must he take advantage of his personal success, but the American Museum's past hesitancy meant that he would have to re-establish old contacts and create new ones with the scientific world. Besides, after four years in Canada's north-land he had an "insatiable hunger for other men's ideas", and after the tent on the silent barrens I want Broadway by archlight and the Strand at five o'clock; after iglu I want the Century Club and the Criterion; after Kajigi monologues on the forefathers wisdom I want scientific conventions where we learn things ...To take the place of the sailor's drunk I want an intellectual orgy...till my next journey--like the sailor's next voyage--calls me to the stagnant country where precedent is king.

Being behind the times and out of touch was unendurable for such a restless spirit. Most important, of course, was his desire to rid himself of money problems and secure the backing of some institution to pay for his expenses while he continued work in the Arctic. The moment seemed propitious if he was to take advantage of a situation which was filled with uncertainties.

134SC, Stefansson Diary, 30 May 1912.

135SC, Stefansson Diary, 9 June 1912.
...the uncertainty that the game will be considered worth even a small cheap candle by those who know of the game at all—the small circle of scientific men who are not always sympathetic or generous—who are not even always scientific. Peary was "a man of one idea" and the best thing about him was that it always seemed to me that he was satisfied with that idea—if he got to the Pole he would have something worthwhile—he could say to himself (as the world would say to him): "You have a right to be satisfied"...and he would answer truthfully: "I am satisfied"...I have the education that colleges and books give....I have the education that experiences give, I know the land I am learning the language of the peoples—and that learning is my work, together with telling what I have learned. For twenty years yet I am likely to have strength to fight the cold climate and to find food for myself and my companions as I have found it the past years. If I am to follow Peary (as I started out to do a few months ago) what I want to confide to any reader of my journal is that the one thing I want is the interest (shown by the giving of money and the lending of willing ears) that shall keep me at work here twenty years. When one gets old, it is said, one begins to long for simple rest, and to find in the hope of rest a satisfactory goal...I want to have free time now and then, between spells of work up here to be with men who are not asleep. I am hoping that if scientific bodies can be found to pay my expenses while I work, my own "popular" writing can pay for my play time. Wherever, in Europe or America, there are men shaping the thought of our time there I want to be (if they will tolerate me for the share I am trying to do) to spend my play hours with them.136

*       *       *

In four years, Stefansson had come a long way in building his career, recruiting one of the best American institutions and a respected branch of the Canadian government 136

SC, Stefansson Diary, 28 May 1912.
to support his endeavours. Once he had learned how to handle them he had created an expedition on his own merits, combining his force of argument with a friendly assertiveness that could not be denied.\textsuperscript{136} Neither Anderson nor the American Museum could contradict that. In the long run, perhaps one of the most questionable conclusions he came to was that an enterprise should be kept going even in the face of a threatened loss of official support, until he secured results that would redeem it and return him to the good graces of its sponsors. Brock's adage had served him well. Yet in the "Stefansson-Anderson Expedition", as the foray of 1908-12 was officially called, the aspect that brought such recognition and influence was not so much his discoveries and investigations, as the publicity attached to his finding of the so-called "Blond Eskimo". This association of success with publicity was to lead Stefansson astray, and would deflect his scientific pursuits for a dozen years or so. His pioneering and promising work amongst the Copper Eskimos was never completed. Unfortunately for Stefansson's scientific career he tried to apply these assumptions regarding the attainment of success, as the evidence suggests, to his next expedition, sponsored by the Government of Canada.

\textsuperscript{136} Stefansson later admitted to Mrs. Anderson that she was "not entirely wrong" when she apparently had suggested that he could "'talk a man into anything if he didn't know me'...I have at least meant well at times." PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915].
CHAPTER V

THE BUILDING OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION

The next enterprise, the Canadian Arctic Expedition, was to be the high point of Stefansson's career of exploration and the culmination of his technique of expedition-building. In this, Stefansson was to reach another plateau in his Canadian career. The Expedition would also be the zenith of the Canadian Government's interest in its northern regions for some time. Not until recently has there been so much money and attention directed towards the Central Arctic coast of the mainland and the Arctic Islands beyond. In 1913, Canadian concern over Arctic sovereignty and her Geological Survey's interest in securing more scientific information about the North "coaxed" the expedition away from American scientific institutions, placing it under the wing of Canada's Department of the Naval Service and, to a confusing degree, of the Geological Survey. Yet Canada's hurried takeover of the expedition, and the ensuing hasty preparations were to work against the undertaking and, in the long run, against Stefansson's plans for his own future.

134
Even before the Expedition, which was Stefansson's own creation, was under the Dominion's control, Stefansson's position and function were subtly altered. Stefansson found that by yielding, perhaps unwisely, to the goals first of the American institutions and eventually to the blandishments of the Canadian government, his original purpose had been blunted and he had had to sacrifice his original intentions regarding the people of Victoria Land. In a sense, he was being used by the Canadian government for its purposes, not his own, for the enterprise grew beyond his control. Throughout the Expedition, Stefansson's position as its head was to be challenged; and he reacted by trying to build up his freedom of initiative to offset this predicament.

Nevertheless, with the help of his newly acquired fame, Stefansson now became intimately associated with the Canadian governments of the time and the Canadian bureaucracy. This, in turn, would place him in a strong position as a favoured individual in Ottawa's halls of power and provide Stefansson with a seeming stepping-stone to still grander endeavours.

Even in 1911 Stefansson knew that his work was incomplete, for despite his short stay with the people of Coronation Gulf, far more comparative research was necessary, at least 15 years he felt--"enough time at my work between Victoria Land and Smith Sound to become 'one of the family',
in at least a dozen places."¹ Stefansson's new expedition—as he envisioned it in the fall and winter of 1912—was to be far more ambitious than that of 1908-12, involving six scientists, a ship, and supplies to last until mid-1916. Although the American Museum of Natural History in New York had been quite impressed with Stefansson's and Anderson's achievements—even ready to defend publicly Stefansson's suggestions concerning the Blond Eskimo and the subsequent maligning of his character,² it was quite hesitant about granting full and unqualified support to the new project. Initially, the Museum refused to take an active part in organizing the new expedition and would only express its approval and vouch for the enterprise as being worthwhile. It can be recalled that Museum officials, accepting the worthiness of Stefansson's project had concluded that the American Museum should not spread itself too thinly by supporting projects which had little direct bearing at that time on the Museum's planning and policy.³ Besides, they had just underwritten an extensive northern expedition under the direction of Donald B. MacMillan to search for

¹AMNH, file 719D. VS to Bumpus, 1 July 1911.

²For example, see AMNH, file 719E. Lucas to the Associated Press, 7 October 1912, file 719E also Osborne to Frank Muncie [of the New York Press] 10 October 1912.

³AMNH, file 1027A. Wissler to Lucas, 11 October 1912.
Peary's legendary Crocker Land,\textsuperscript{4} said to exist north and west of Ellesmere Island; the Museum claimed it could not spare a penny for another Arctic expedition.

Stefansson's expedition was further handicapped because he was not allowed to solicit funds from the trustees of the Museum or from any person who had been a patron; in addition, the city of New York had been thoroughly canvassed for the Crocker Land expedition, leaving only a few crumbs for Stefansson.\textsuperscript{5} Not only was the Museum afraid Stefansson might duplicate and encroach on work done by the Crocker Land expedition, but it was still apprehensive about his temperament and suitability to carry out Museum work. At one point the Museum entertained the idea that Stefansson should be MacMillan's companion; the adverse reaction to the idea, and the frequent calling into question of Stefansson's trustworthiness, reliability, and personality no doubt surprised the Museum authorities and added to their uneasiness.

\textsuperscript{4}See, Donald B. MacMillan, \textit{Four Years in the White North}, (New York, 1918). MacMillan had accompanied Robert E. Peary on his unsuccessful 1906 quest for the North Pole. While attempting to reach 90° north latitude in 1906, Peary was certain that he had seen snow-clad mountains to the west of him, roughly in the direction north and west of Axel Heiberg and Ellesmere Islands. It appeared as though Peary had come close to substantiating Dr. R.A. Harris' theory, but in all probability this incident was merely another sighting of an ice-island. Nevertheless, such observations set off another wave of exploration.

\textsuperscript{5}AMNH, Wissler to Osborn, 13 December 1912, file 1027A.
about supporting Stefansson on a large project of his own.\textsuperscript{6}

Osborn may have sympathized with Stefansson's cause, but there was little he could do. Stefansson's only full supporter was Clark Wissler, who requested, and received, permission to take an active part in the organization of the expedition, entirely independent of the Museum.\textsuperscript{7} Wissler's pressure, and his hint that the expedition could receive outside financial aid on the condition that the American Museum withdraw its support\textsuperscript{8} forced the Museum to take an active part in the proposed scheme.

For much to the Museum's dismay during the winter Stefansson also hammered out a scheme with the National Geographic Society, Admiral Pilsbury, one of that Society's directors, was evidently pleased to announce that the proposed expedition would "be under the name of the National Geographic Society,. . ."\textsuperscript{9}

The main purpose of the expedition may be considered to be geographical for the ethnographic [sic] investigations fall within the province of geography. The time to be covered by the expedition will be

\textsuperscript{6} AMNH, Crocker Land file no. 48, George P. Howe [Doctor with Anglo-American Polar Expedition] to E.O. Hovey, 26 May 1912; Dr. W.C. Farrabee [Department of Anthropology, Harvard] to Hovey, 27 May 1912; see p. 120; Dr. Townsend W. Thorndyke [Boston acquaintance of Stefansson] to Hovey, 29 May 1912.

\textsuperscript{7} AMNH, file 1027A. Wissler to Lucas, 11 October 1912.

\textsuperscript{8} AMNH, file 1027A. Wissler to Osborn, 13 December 1912.

\textsuperscript{9} Files of the National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C. [hereafter NGS], statement by Admiral Pilsbury, n.d., [probably winter 1912].
three winters and four summers beginning with the summer of 1913. The field of operations will be Victoria Island, Banks' Land and Prince Patrick's Island, all situated north of the mainland of North America and forming, with Melville Island, the western most of the group of the American Polar Lands. 10

The goal of the proposed expedition was to discover and delineate any new land or, if no land was found, determine by soundings, the limit of the Continental Shelf. 11 This aspect in particular upset the American Museum of Natural History, which had already underwritten a related search for Crocker Land under the leadership of Donald MacMillan; the Museum, naturally, feared that Stefansson's plan encroached upon its own northern programme.

Prior to his seeking help from the National Geographic, Stefansson had, in the fall, concluded a verbal agreement with the Museum regarding the Crocker Land expedition. He was asked "not to make any attempt to reach any part of the archipelago of which Crocker Land forms a part, until after Mr. MacMillan had had a chance to reach it." Stefansson refused to refrain from using ships "from any explorations that the opening of the Beaufort Sea might render practicable", but agreed not to make any sledge journey toward the hypothetical

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
continent until after 1914. Under the National Geographic, Stefansson was under no such restrictions and apparently the Museum was afraid that he might not abide by prior arrangement. Faced with this possible threat and to protect its "investment" in MacMillan, the Museum had no alternative but to buy into Stefansson's expedition to the tune of $22,500.

The Museum, therefore, came to terms and countered with a "tentative" and unofficial proposition to Stefansson to the effect that it was now willing to co-operate actively with the National Geographic Society. The basis of its proposal was that all geographic results and publications should lie with the National Geographic, while the ethnological and zoological material and results—in which the Museum was chiefly concerned—were to lie with the New York institution. The Museum recognized that to ensure Stefansson's and MacMillan's interests did not collide a division of territory was necessary. By opting to support Stefansson it hoped to control the situation and not allow an angry scientific rivalry to develop.

It can be assumed that the National Geographic would have liked to be the exclusive sponsor of the expedition, but its president, Gilbert Grosvenor, was attracted by Stefansson's

---

12SC, Desbarats-1913 file, E.O. Hovey to VS, 9 January 1913.

13Ibid.

14SC, Desbarats-1913 file, Lucas to VS, 7 January 1913.

15Ibid.
idea that a special ship would facilitate the exploration. But a ship would be very expensive, and the National Geographic was hesitant to allocate such funds toward co-operation with another body, namely the American Museum. In any case, an agreement was drawn up between the 24th and 25th of January 1913, at Grosvenor's home in Washington among Stefansson and the American Museum of Natural History, and the National Geographic Society. It was understood that the polar region would be divided, "that Prince Patrick's Land will be Mr. Stefansson's base, and that Cape Thomas Hubbard will be the Crocker Land expedition base, and that, while in a general way the territory will be divided for geographic exploration, either partners striking this supposed coastline may proceed in the direction of the other party without infringement," but only after the hypothetical continent had been reached.

The title of the expedition was to be "The Stefansson-Anderson Expedition of 1913, 14, 15, 16", the leader being Stefansson and the second-in-command, R.M. Anderson. Its purpose "shall be the thorough scientific exploration of the

16 AMNH, file 1027A. Gilbert Grosvenor, President of National Geographic Society to Osborn, 18 January 1913.

17 AMNH, file 1027A. Memorandum of Agreement between Vilhjalmur Stefansson, leader, and members of the expedition, party of the first part, and the National Geographic Society and the American Museum of Natural History, party of the second part, regarding the Stefansson-Anderson Arctic Expedition, n.d. [January, 1913].

18 Ibid.
unknown Polar region to the north and west of Banks Land and Prince Patrick's Island.\textsuperscript{19} The National Geographic Society was made responsible for the planning of the geographic, meteorological, tidal and physical observations while the American Museum was to be in charge of anthropology, biology, and zoology.\textsuperscript{20}

In consideration of the joint financing all material results, collections and data--including photographs (except motion pictures)--were the sole property of the National Geographic Society and the American Museum of Natural History, "including exclusive rights of publication."\textsuperscript{21}

Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson...agrees to prepare and have his assistants prepare immediately upon their return from the Arctic regions such popular and scientific reports of the expedition's work as may be called for by [the party of the second part], in whom exclusive rights of publication will lie. The leader, Mr. Stefansson[,] also binds himself to prevent any member of the expedition publishing material unless said material has been released by the Editor of the National Geographic Magazine. It is also agreed that the leader shall have the use of any or all photographs or pictures for the purpose of making lantern slides to illustrate any lectures he may wish to make upon the expedition's return.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Later, this innocent looking stipulation was to provoke considerable disharmony. Nonetheless, it appeared as though the sponsors were to maintain stricter control than had been evident in the 1908-12 expedition.

This new Arctic foray was not, in reality, an extension of the 1908-12 expedition, for the simple fact was that the emphasis and direction of the venture had now shifted to geographic exploration. Archeological and ethnological study of the Eskimo in and around Coronation Gulf—the purpose for which Stefansson had started organizing the expedition—had slipped to a secondary place. To obtain the support of the National Geographic, Stefansson had reluctantly accepted this order of priorities. Compromising his objectives was the price to be paid for his eagerness to return North. Priority was given to completion of the map of the coast lines of Victoria Island and Prince Patrick Island, then to three off-shore journeys to discover new land or at least the edge of the continental shelf, and to systematic tidal observations.

\[23\] PAC, Manuscript Group 30/C24, Stefansson Diary [hereafter PAC], Stefansson Diary, 1 April 1915.

\[24\] "Of course geography is science, but it is chiefly anthropo-geography that attracts me. It is a sense of my pledges and what is expected of me that keeps me at sea exploration. After all, the geographic side of this expedition was originally 'played up' by me to get money for the archeological and ethnological work planned by Dr. Wissler and me. It did not seem to us possible to get the money for anthropological work purely from sensationalism—we were Jesuists [sic] in the means chosen to the end desired." \textit{Ibid.}

\[25\] AMNH, Memorandum of Agreement...[January, 1913].
Stefansson's original priorities were given lesser importance, and were to be found only in the fourth and fifth clauses of the January 1913 agreement:

(d) By summer exploration of Banks Island, Victoria Island, Prince Patrick Island and of any new land that may be discovered an attempt will be made to determine the former range of human occupation of the Arctic Islands as well as the character of the culture of the people involved. Further archaeological work will be done in the districts investigated by the American Museum of Natural History and the Geological Survey of Canada Arctic Expedition of 1908-12.

(e) The biological and historical problems connected with the already ascertained physical differences of the Victoria Island Eskimo from the typical characters of their race make it seem important that more full investigations shall be undertaken to determine by exact mechanical means[,] such as color photography, the degrees of their divergence from type. All other ordinary investigations of an ethnological nature will also be pursued, including a detailed study of phonetics by mechanical and other means.26

Stefansson had to face another problem, for, added to this shift in emphasis, was the fact that the National Geographic and American Museum could not decide on how their respective financial allocations should be administered. The National Geographic was to contribute $22,500 of which $8,000 was to be payable in 1913, $5,000 in 1914, $5,000 in 1915, and $4,500 in 1916. Their funds were to be deposited in a bank selected by Stefansson and which was to act as his financial agent.27 The American Museum was also to contribute $22,500, but, unlike the National Geographic, it felt that past

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
experience had shown "that it was absolutely necessary to have a committee in charge of the business management and to conduct the expedition on business principles, not giving out any orders (i.e. honour drafts) unless funds were available to defray the expenses."\(^{28}\) The American Museum did not wish to have Stefansson in charge of expenditures; on the contrary, the National Geographic, even after the American Museum representation, preferred not to assume business responsibilities.\(^{29}\) Yet both institutions were aware some sort of common arrangement had to be worked out. Small points to the societies, but to Stefansson who was also called upon to provide an indemnity bond as a guarantee,\(^{30}\) such arrangements meant he would lose personal control. Yet there was little he could do, for there was no clause this time giving him the freedom of action and decision he had had in 1908.

Besides, according to Stefansson, the two societies' $45,000 would simply not be enough to carry out the project.\(^{31}\)

\(^{28}\)AMNH, file 1027A. Memorandum of a Conference between President Osborn and Mr. Grosvenor, 30 January 1913.

\(^{29}\)Ibid.

\(^{30}\)Ibid.

\(^{31}\)PAC, Manuscript Group 26/H, Papers of Sir Robert Borden [hereafter Borden Papers], R.W. Brock to W.S. Roche [Minister of the Interior], 4 February 1913.
It was obvious to Stefansson that more help would be required. Once again, with the blessing of Osborn,\textsuperscript{32} he turned to the Canadian government, particularly to R.W. Brock of the Geological Survey, who would naturally have an interest in the Expedition.\textsuperscript{33} Once Stefansson knew he had the full backing of the Geological Survey, he secured an interview with Robert L. Borden in which he asked the Prime Minister to provide an additional $25,000 on behalf of Canada.\textsuperscript{34} Borden remained non-committal and Stefansson relied on Brock to carry on the fight.\textsuperscript{35} Within the week, the Expedition had been entirely removed from the hands of the National Geographic and the American Museum of Natural History.

The Dominion Government, after some consideration, thought it would be prudent to pay the total cost of the Expedition, and take it over entirely as a national enterprise. Such an arrangement would simplify matters not only for Stefansson—\textsuperscript{33} who could count on the backing of a powerful

\textsuperscript{32} SC, Desbarats-1913 file, Osborne to VS, [telegrams of] 4 February and 5 February 1913.

\textsuperscript{33} PAC, Record Group 42, Department of Marine [old Department of Naval Service files], Stefansson Arctic Expedition, 1913-[1918], [hereafter RG42], file 84-2-55, Brock to Roche, 4 February 1913.

\textsuperscript{34} PAC, Borden Papers, VS to Borden, 4 February 1913.

\textsuperscript{35} For example, see PAC, RG42, file 84-2-55, Brock to Roche, 4 February 1913.
institution and perhaps obtain a freer hand in the expedition—but for the Canadian government. With the ending in 1911 of Bernier's expeditions, undertaken during the Laurier years, the Conservatives were anxious to have a northern programme of their own. Moreover, the government expressed some anxiety that any discoveries of new land by aliens might complicate the vexing question of territorial sovereignty.

* * *

The Canadian government, although tardy and sometimes muddled in its actions, was never complacent about the question of sovereignty. The activities of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police after 1903, W.F. King's Report on Canada's title to the northern islands (1905), and the subsequent voyages of Captain Joseph E. Bernier were testimony to Canadian apprehensions over the future of the Arctic archipelago. It may have been Bernier's persistent campaign, and the polar exploits of Cook and Peary for instance, which led a worried Senator P. Poirier to invent the "sector theory" and attempt to apply it to the northern islands. In 1907, Poirier was quite forceful in demanding that Canada make a formal declaration of possession or face the prospect of forfeiting her rights in that region. The Senator suggested that the Arctic be divided like a pie, in this case with the North Pole as the centre. Norway, Sweden, Russia, the United States, and, of course, Canada, would each be given its share. The Dominion's slice would lie between 141°west longitude to
roughly 60° west longitude, thereby encompassing a triangle stretching from Canada's Arctic coast to the North Pole.

This partition of the polar regions seems to be the most natural, because it is simply a geographical one. By that means difficulties would be avoided, and there would be no cause for trouble between interested countries. Every country bordering on the Arctic would simply extend its possession up to the North Pole. 36

The issue was sidetracked by Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce in the Laurier Cabinet and Senate Leader, who assured Poirier that due attention would be paid to the matter, since "negotiations" (which were never specified) were in progress it might not "be the part of policy to formally proclaim any special limitations." 37 Yet Poirier's proposal was not really forgotten, for two and a half years later Bernier, commanding an official Canadian government expedition and armed with a royal commission to annex specific lands, placed a copper tablet on Melville Island claiming the entire sector for Canada. 38 Bernier's actions was not only a fulfillment of a dream, but also, in large measure, recognition of the annexation of islands by 1904. However, the controversial sector theory, as shall be shown later, is not the fundamental premise upon which Canada has based her claim to the northern archipelago.

36 Canada, Senate Debates, 20 February 1907, p. 271.

37 Ibid., p. 274.

Cartwright's assurances probably did little to comfort those Canadians who wanted a forthright position. American institutions, such as the American Museum of Natural History and the National Geographic Society, continued to finance northern expeditions. Furthermore, in reaction to a growing interest in the discovery of Spitzbergen coal, the United States' Committee on Foreign Relations recommended that the Guano Act of 1856 be amended: whenever an American citizen discovered not only a deposit of guano, but also of phosphates, coal and other minerals, on any island or portion of an island not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government, and took possession and occupied the territory, the United States government could, at the discretion of the President, consider it as belonging to the United States. This proposal was passed by the Senate in 1910, but was again referred to Committee where it ultimately died. Had it become law, there is distinct possibility that many claims to the Arctic islands might have been filed in the name of the United States under such legislation. 39 Canada could not help but be fearful.

The same must also have been true of the Canadian reaction to the Stefansson-Anderson Expedition of 1913, under

39 Plischke, p. 31.
joint sponsorship of two American Institutions. It is true that in early February of 1913, Stefansson, with the approval of his American backers, was seeking Canadian help. But unlike the 1908-12 expedition, this one was primarily geared to the discovery of new land in the Arctic. Whose would such land be? No doubt the Canadian government was also perturbed by the manner in which these two American institutions had arbitrarily divided up the northern reaches of the Canadian 'sector' for exploration and discovery by the Crocker Land and the Stefansson-Anderson expeditions. The "sub-committee of Council [i.e. the cabinet] appointed to talk matters over with Mr. Stefansson" on February 7, 1913,

...decided that if it could be arranged we thought it advisable for the Dominion to pay the whole cost of the proposed expedition, on condition that Mr. Stefansson would become a naturalized British subject before leaving and that the expedition would fly the British flag. In this way we would get the entire benefit of the expedition and Canada would have any land that might be discovered....The subcommittee... feels strongly that the Dominion Government should have a hand in this expedition and if possible control and pay for it....

Canadian authorities would try their best to wrest it from the Americans. Yet the tone of the cabinet's decision suggests that if either Stefansson or his backers refused to co-operate with the Canadian authorities the Dominion was prepared to do little, aside from token official scrutiny, to discourage

40 PAC, RG42, 84-2-55, Memorandum initialed "G.H.P." [G.H. Perley], 7 February 1913. See also, PAC, RG42, 84-2-24, Roche to VS, 8 February 1913.
private explorations.

The responsibility for providing an easy transfer of the expedition to Canadian auspices devolved upon Stefansson. According to Anderson, Stefansson accepted the Canadian offer without consulting either the American Museum, the National Geographic Society or himself.\textsuperscript{41} This was not entirely true--Anderson was merely the last party Stefansson conferred with before taking any action. Then, at the very last moment, the name of the expedition was changed to the "Canadian Arctic Expedition of Vilhjalmur Stefansson" to distinguish it from the former Stefansson-Anderson expedition and to emphasize its "Canadian character."\textsuperscript{42} This did nothing to enhance the future relationship between the two men. As for sounding out his American backers about the generous Canadian offer:

Mr. Stefansson would not say definitely whether he would agree to this arrangement or not but stated that he thought it would be very satisfactory to have the whole cost paid from one source. He did not seem to have any particular objection to taking the oath of naturalization although he did not say definitely he would do so. It seems he is under a good many obligations to the National Geographic Society who promise to pay $22,500 towards the expenses of the expedition. Mr. Stefansson did not feel at liberty to agree to do the work entirely under the auspices of the Dominion without first obtaining the consent of that Society. He thought

\textsuperscript{41}PAC, RMA/20, R.M. Anderson, "Preliminary History of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-16", n.d.

\textsuperscript{42}PAC, 84-2-1/vol. 1, Brock to Desbarats, 28 May 1913.
however, that he will have no difficulty in getting such consent, as scientific work which the Society is anxious to have done would be in that case paid for by the Dominion government and the funds of the Society could be used in other directions. 43

No mention was made of the American Museum, whose quick acquiescence could be predicted; it had never wanted to be actively engaged in the scheme and had only given in reluctantly to Stefansson's manoeuvring. When Stefansson broached the question to the New York institution, Osborn, on behalf of the Museum, readily wished Stefansson well, 44 undoubtedly thankful that the Museum was not being forced now to go in over its financial head and support two costly northern exploratory schemes.

Anderson acquiesced to the transfer, for he had little influence in the matter. Besides, the American Museum now could only offer him a position for one year. After a conference with Brock, the Geological Survey offered him a more permanent position in the Victoria Museum (now the National Museum of Canada) at a salary equal to that of the American Museum of Natural History. 45

The National Geographic was a different matter for it had more than a passing interest in the project. The

43 PAC, RG42, 84-2-55, Memorandum ["G.H.P."], 7 February 1913.

44 AMNH, file 1027A. Osborn to VS, 12 February 1913.

45 PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...."
Society had spent much time and effort in an endeavour which would further their own scientific programme, "to have that portion of the map cleared which you [Stefansson] propose to explore, and it was our faith in you as the best-equipped and most experienced man to do the work that inspired the Society to make our appropriation...to assist in your expedition." 46

Realizing that they could not match the Canadian government in terms of funds, the National Geographic relinquished its claim upon the expedition gracefully "providing you can make arrangements with the Canadian government that will permit your expedition to depart in May or June, 1913." 47 The Society was so intent on seeing "their" expedition succeed that they stipulated that "[i]f the Canadian Government cannot assist you this year, the Society reserves its claims upon your expedition and is prepared to send you North in May or June next." 48 It became doubly important then for the Canadian government to push ahead as soon as possible with its newly-acquired expedition or forfeit it to the National Geographic. The ensuing haste, however, led to an ill-organized and two-chambered expedition which did much to

46 SC, Desbarats-1913 file, Gilbert H. Grosvenor to VS, 11 February 1913.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.
impair its efficiency. The take-over and resulting alterations by the Canadian authorities also put Stefansson in a slightly different position, for he became more a pawn of the Canadian government than he would have been under his American backers. The Dominion's plans and priorities were overlaid on his own, and would produce inconsistencies between groups of individuals and their purposes. The personal controversies generated—admittedly, common to most expeditions—were also heightened by the rush to get the enterprise in the field by mid-1913. These controversies and bickerings would lead to a strong anti-Stefansson faction during the Expedition. This in turn would affect Stefansson's later endeavours in Ottawa's corridors of power, and would be partially responsible for the ending of Stefansson's Canadian career.

From late February to June, 1913, Stefansson, Anderson and the Canadian government were caught up in a wild round of activities designed to send the expedition North before the season became too late. On February 23, 1913, the Committee of the Privy Council established the critical guidelines under which the expedition would operate.  

and final instructions were hammered out late in May, on
the eve of the expedition's departure. In addition to the
discovery of the new lands

[t]he expedition should bring back information as to
the minerals which exist in these regions, as to the
food fisheries which live in the sea, and as to the
meteorological...conditions which prevail in these
northern latitudes...The expedition will also have
occasion to examine...the operation of the American
whalers which frequent the northern waters of Canada,
and of putting into force the customs and fisheries
regulations which these whalers should observe.50

Government departments involved in the enterprise were to be
the Departments of the Naval Service, which was entrusted
with "the general direction of the expedition", Marine and
Fisheries, Interior, Customs, and Geological Survey (a
branch of the Department of Mines). Detailed instructions
were issued at a later date and, by their very nature, would
contribute to the general confusion and disharmony:

The scientific work of the Canadian Arctic expedition
under V. Stefansson relating to geology, geography,
anthropology and biology (exclusive of marine biology)
shall be under the direction of the Geological Survey,
and the scientific staff engaged in the above work shall
report to the Geological Survey.

Summary reports of the progress of individual lines
of investigation shall be made by each of these officers
yearly, if possible, and the final report as soon after
the return of the official as is practicable.

All scientific data related to the above lines of
investigation, including manuscript notes, specimens,
and photographic material resulting from the expedition,
are to be the property of the Geological Survey and are
to be turned in to the Survey as early as possible and

50 Ibid.
not later than the acceptance of the manuscript report. Prints and photographs selected by him may be given to the leader of the expedition for his own use.

In planning the scientific work in the field and affording the necessary facilities for its execution, precedence is to be given by the leaders to the various branches of the work in the order of relative importance herein specified.

In the northern party the relative importance of the investigations are as follows: 1. geographical 2. oceanographical and biological (marine) 3. Geological 4. magnetical 5. anthropological 6. biological (terrestrial) (meteorological is not specified as that can always be carried on without interference in the other investigations). In the southern party the relative importance of the investigations are: 1. geological 2. geographical 3. anthropological 4. biological 5. photographic.

The officer appointed to the expedition to take charge of the depot shall make meteorological observations, and attend to the chronometers, tide gauge and recording instruments, except when relieved by one of the other officers who is temporarily detained at the depot.

The work for the northern party cannot be definitely specified in detail, as it will depend upon circumstances and must be left entirely to the judgement of the leader. The discovery of new land and its exploration are the prime objects of this exploration: the oceanography of the unknown sea and exploration of Banks and Prince Patrick's Island are also important, though secondary.

The work of the southern party shall be primarily the investigation and aerial mapping of the copper bearing and associated rocks of the mainland between Cape Perry and Kent Peninsula, and for approximately 100 miles inland, and on southern and eastern Victoria Land.

The work undertaken by these parties should be of a high order for this class of exploration and should mark a distinct advance over previous work. To secure such results the geographical and topographical subparties should follow closely the regular scheme for field parties engaged on reconnaissance work adopted by the Geological Survey. In working from the base depot these parties should be practically complete, distinct and independent units. This does not imply that a biologist or ethnologist could not accompany
such a party, but merely that the programme of work and freedom of movement should not be interfered with or hampered by biological or ethnological considerations.

The chief of the southern party, as executive head, must afford every reasonable facility as circumstances permit to enable these sub-parties to carry out the above most important work. Mr. J.J. O'Neill shall have charge of the geological work and Mr. Chipman of the geographical work with Mr. Cox as his assistant.

The anthropological work shall consist of ethnological work and archeological research. So far as practicable, the work shall be divided between the two anthropologists (equally), one being given the eastern and one a western territory. When circumstances force them to work in the same area, Dr. Beauchat, shall study religion, festivals, folklore, social organization, text and linguistics, and Dr. Jenness shall study physical characteristics, hunting, fishing, and technology in general.

The biological work will consist of marine and terrestrial biology. Dr. Anderson will have charge of the mammalogy and ornithology, and Mr. Johansen, if with the southern party, of the marine biology, entomology, botany, etc.

In all branches of scientific work full and representative collections are to be made, so far as possible, for the scientific collections and museum of the Survey. 51

51 PAC, RG42, 84-2-1/1, "Memorandum for Instructions, Arctic Expedition", n.d., [late Spring, 1913]. It should be noted here that most of the instructions were carried out. Stefansson's results appeared in his The Friendly Arctic, (New York, 1921) and numerous articles, see Bibliography; the Southern Party's endeavours and movements appeared in a multi-volume series published mainly in the 1920's: See Canada, Department of the Naval Service, Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, 14 volumes. (Ottawa, 1920-46). The movements of the Southern Party (1913-16) being secondary to this study of Stefansson have little bearing on the subject at hand and have not been detailed except to clarify certain situations involving Stefansson, his Northern Party, and the Southern Party. The Southern Section's movements between 1913-16 can be traced in the multi-volume series mentioned above or, better still from the point of conciseness, in the shorter, Canada, Department of the Naval Service, Report of the Southern Division of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913, (Ottawa, 1917) written
Herein lay the seeds of future discord.

The estimated cost for the four year expedition would be between $75,000 and $85,000, roughly, two-thirds of which would be required in the spring of 1913 to buy a vessel and outfit the party. Supplementary estimates for the "patrol of the northern waters of Canada" were to provide money for the expedition of 1912-13 and 1913-14. 52

Scientific material, other results and collections belonged to the government. "Mr. Stefansson, would, however, be free to deliver public lectures, write magazine articles, and make general use of the information he has acquired, provided the first use of this information is given to the Canadian Government." 53 Stefansson's services were to be free, and he was to have "full responsibility, and to have the choice of the men going on the expedition; and of the ships, provisions, and outfit needed for the trip."

At the same time the government cleared up a constitutional problem involving itself and the Mother Country within the context of Empire; this would give added authority by R.M. Anderson. The question of differing points of view between Stefansson and the Southern Party are taken up in Chapters VI and VII of the thesis. The controversies over Stefansson's The Friendly Arctic and the publication of the official government reports are detailed in Chapter X of this work.


53 Ibid.
and weight to the annexation of lands in the Arctic not transferred by the Order-in-Council of 1880:

...So far as the lands on which the flag is so planted are already, in virtue of the Order-in-Council [1880] part of Canadian territory no question can arise as to the authority of your Government to deal with the matter, but as it is an established part of the law of the Empire that no Governor has a general delegation of authority to effect annexation of territory, His Majesty's Government are advised that in order to remove any doubt as to the validity of the proceedings of the Canadian Government—with the aim of which they are in full sympathy—it is desirable that formal authority should be given for the annexation of any lands to the north of Canada not already belonging to any foreign power which may not yet be British territory. I have accordingly received His Majesty's commands to convey to the Governor-General authority, with the advice of the Privy Council of the Dominion, to take possession of and annex to, His Majesty's Dominions any lands lying to the north of Canadian territory as defined in the Order[-]in[-]Council of 1880 which are not within the jurisdiction of any civilized power.

...As it is not desirable that any stress should be laid on the fact that a portion of the territory may not already be British, I do not consider it advisable that this despatch should be published, but it should be permanently recorded as giving authority for annexation to the Governor-General in Council.

...I have to add that if your Ministers consider it desirable His Majesty's Government will be prepared when the result of the expedition and the extent of the lands in question are known, to issue a fresh Order[-]in[-]Council supplementing that of July 31, 1880.54

Thus armed, Stefansson set about to acquire the men and material and ship necessary for the extensive voyage. In reality, most of the organization, selection of men and

54PAC, Record Group 12, volume 29, no. 1654-1, Colonial Secretary to "The Officer administering the Government of Canada," 10 May 1913.
general administrative work was relegated to Anderson, who, because of the May deadline, was forced to work under extreme pressure. Yet within three months Anderson was able to put together a very respectable organization including fifteen scientists or specialists. Stefansson was to have had exclusive control over this, but his trip to Europe to attend a scientific conference and purchase delicate scientific equipment, meant that someone he knew and trusted would be left with this responsibility.

The only stipulation for selection of personnel that Stefansson required was a rather formidable one.

No one will be taken anywhere except to the base from which he is to work. From that base there will be no question of being taken to other places—every man is expected to get to wherever he wants to be within 400 miles of a base. We will provide Eskimo companions but the white man will have to walk as many steps as they and to depend on themselves.

This was a rather tall order for scientific men who, for the most part, would be going North for the first time; Stefansson wanted recruits in his own image and this was to spell trouble for his future relations with members of the scientific staff. None of the expedition would suffer hardships or danger if they followed the gospel according to Stefansson, and,

---

55 See PAC, RMA/1, 2 & 3.

56 See Appendix I.

57 PAC, RMA/1, Stefansson to Brock, 1 March 1913.
personally, he was reluctant to take any man who refused to adapt—even at the price of lowering the scientific status of the expedition: "...if they will insist on having hardships dismiss them in favor of men less qualified technically and physically, for the right temperament is more important than health or strength." Stefansson may have been right, but later during the expedition he would become scornful and paternalistic because even these handpicked individuals did not aspire to his demands.

Anderson, already swamped with applications attempted to comply with Stefansson's desires regarding the personnel, but had to turn his attention to the provisioning of the venture. With little or no experience he accomplished the task admirably, following the suggestions of Captain Pederson whom Stefansson had hoped would command the vessel. Complications were to arise when it was decided that, because of the expansion of the scope of the expedition and the division into Northern and Southern Parties, a second ship would be required. But the resulting confusion and chaos attendant upon proper provisioning could in no way be a reflection on Anderson's or Stefansson's initial efforts.

Perhaps the touchiest aspect of readying the expedition

58 Ibid.
and the best example of the folly of haste was the choice of the Karluk as the ship.

On his return from the North in 1912, Stefansson, anxious to return to his research, made plans to secure a vessel suitable for his new exploits. He engaged Theodore Pederson, a respected whaling captain, and three firms of shipping inspectors to scout out suitable vessels for sale on the Pacific coast. 59 Three vessels were found: the Jeannette, the Elvira and the Karluk. The last was the preference of Stefansson's "scouts". Despite the fact that she had been a whaling ship since 1889—a long time for any wooden barquentine—she was considered "suitable" for ice work and, since the whaling industry was in an absolute decline, she was rather inexpensive as whaling vessels went, according to Stefansson. In 1909 she was sold for $15,000; in 1913 she was for sale "at $10,000 although her condition is better than it was four years ago on account of certain important repairs which have been completed since." 60 The government would have to look no further, for Stefansson, seeing a bargain, had placed a $500 deposit on the Karluk in full expectation that his sponsors would pay the balance; 61 and this the government did, 62 anxious

59 PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 1, VS to Desbarats, 25 February 1913.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

to proceed at full steam as soon as possible, without so much as looking into the question. Stefansson always maintained that the *Karluk* was the only vessel capable of withstanding the strains of the Arctic ice, and that charges that she was "unsound" were unwarranted.\(^6^3\) Yet the condition—real or imagined—of the *Karluk* is crucial to the understanding of later relations between members of the expedition.

Almost as soon as the government had purchased the *Karluk*, and had her transferred to Esquimalt Dock the Engineer Commander, having higher technical standards than Stefansson or even an American whaling captain, advised Ottawa that substantial repairs were required. Despite Stefansson's contention that important repairs had been completed before his purchase, the *Karluk* needed initially $4,400 of repairs;\(^6^4\) less than a month later, while repairs were going smoothly a further examination revealed "additional defects" to the tune of another $1,500.\(^6^5\) Roughly $6,000 to repair a $10,000 ship that had, according to Stefansson,


\(^6^4\) PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 1, Memorandum of Engineer Commander, Esquimalt, 29 March 1913.

\(^6^5\) PAC, RG42, 84-2-23/vol. 1, Engineer Commander, Esquimalt to Desbarats, 22 April 1913.
undergone important repairs prior to sale! The lists submitted by both the Engineer Commander and Captain R.A. Bartlett (who was to command the ship) indicate that the Karluk had to be overhauled from stem to stern.\textsuperscript{66} To top this off, Desbarats, on the eve of the Karluk's departure from Esquimalt, received a coded message revealing Bartlett's honest appraisal of the ship's fitness even after all the repairs:

Captain Bartlett has made careful examination of Karluk, he states he considers ship absolutely unsuitable to remain in winter ice. Karluk could take expedition and leave them, ship returning south for winter. Her lines and build are unsuited for being jammed in the ice, besides not have sufficient beams and sheathing.\textsuperscript{67}

Such a judgment was, no doubt, partly based on Bartlett's association with Peary in the Eastern Arctic, for the vessel used there, the Roosevelt, was built to Peary's specifications.\textsuperscript{68} Bartlett's standards were not only demanding, but based on experience as well.

Such a revelation so late in the game could prove

\textsuperscript{66}See Memorandum of Engineer Commander, 29 March 1913; also PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 1, Memorandum of Captain R. Bartlett, 1 April 1913.

\textsuperscript{67}PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 1, Engineer Commander, Esquimalt to Desbarats, 26 May 1913. Apparently, the same diagnosis may have come from the man who recommended the Karluk to Stefansson; apparently Captain Pederson had told Kenneth Chipman the same thing later, according to Chipman at least. Chipman Papers, Chipman Diary, 17 October 1913.

\textsuperscript{68}See Bartlett and Hale, The Last Voyage of the Karluk, pp. 39-47, for Bartlett's comparison of the two ships.
embarrassing to Desbarats and Stefansson. All Stefansson could do was reply rather forcefully—yet at the same time weakly—that the "Karluk has wintered in the Arctic a dozen times and is as good as any whaler in Western Arctic. We have to use [the] only ship we have."69 She may have been a good tough whaling ship capable of wintering in the Arctic in a properly prepared winter haven, but to deliberately put her into the ice—or even entertain such an idea as Stefansson did at one point—would not be the wisest course of action. What was serious was that the Dominion government concurred with Stefansson even though it was evident that the Karluk had been a bad buy. Under normal circumstances it probably would have paid more attention to the safety factor, but the pressure of time made it take a tremendous risk with the lives of the men who would sail on the Karluk. But there was no turning back; the expedition had to proceed as best it could with the available men, resources and equipment. All it awaited was Stefansson to take command.

*   *   *

While most of the preparations for the expedition were in progress Stefansson was, after February, in Europe

69 PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 1, VS to Bartlett, 27 May 1913.

70 PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, 23 June 1913.
and in the United States. Anderson commented later that Stefansson's trip to Europe was "ostensibly to obtain equipment", which he acknowledged as legitimate; but his major achievements, Anderson bitterly charged, were to attend the International Geographic Congress in Rome to establish valuable contacts and "sell all the prospective results of the expedition" to magazines, papers, and newsreel companies.\(^71\) This was largely true: publicity was arranged and story rights were sold. The government had given the commander this privilege, and Stefansson went on to ensure his control by persuading the Canadian government on the eve of the expedition's departure that

\[
\text{[e]very member [of the Canadian Arctic Expedition] should promise to take every precaution in his power to prevent news of the expedition getting into circulation prior to the issuing of the official announcement of the expedition and every man should agree neither to publish any written article nor to give lectures within two years from the return of the expedition, except on special permission given by the leader of the expedition.}\(^72\)
\]

It was obvious that Stefansson was trying to protect his exclusive contracts with the news media; yet it should have been apparent that even with this official government sanction, he could not but arouse disappointment and outright hostility from

\(^{71}\text{PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...." Stefansson also arranged in advance for a lecture tour of North America in 1913. The lectures would be based on the exploits and findings of the forthcoming Canadian Arctic Expedition. Stefansson, Discovery, p. 212.}\)

\(^{72}\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, VS to Desbarats, 14 May 1913.}\)
aspiring scientists. The latter depended on publication to establish or enhance their own professional status, but they knew nothing about Stefansson's "arrangement" until after the expedition was heading towards the Arctic.

With Stefansson away spending the "play time" he had thought of in 1912\(^{73}\) with fellow scientists on both sides of the Atlantic, and with time running so short, the Canadian government was anxious that he return and assume the helm. Small details concerning final arrangements and personnel had to be taken care of otherwise, Desbarats warned, "expedition will be delayed if you are unable to attend these."\(^{74}\) Desbarats was in an absolute panic\(^{75}\) for Stefansson was able to spare only a few days at a time in Ottawa.\(^{76}\) And yet his excuses for being away were often purely personal and shallow:

Had I been able to stay in Ottawa instead of New York, things no doubt would have gone somewhat

\(^{73}\)See p. 132, SC, Stefansson Diary, 28 May 1912.

\(^{74}\)PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, Desbarats to VS, [telegram] 17 April 1913.

\(^{75}\)For example, see PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, Desbarats to VS, [telegram], 14 May 1913; also PAC, Manuscript Group 30/E7, Desbarats Diary, 22 May 1913.

\(^{76}\)For example on 3 May 1913, when Stefansson swooped into Ottawa, attended to aspects of the expedition, and took the oath of allegiance to the King, thereby making him a British subject. PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, Certificate of the Privy Council, 3 May 1913. Then he departed.
smoothly with regard to the Expedition but I simply had to get my book ready for the press in order to have something to live on, for, as you know, I have no salary from anybody; and the details of the Expedition down here take so much of my time that I have been able to put only an hour or two a day on the matter of getting the copy of my book ready.77

Only in the last week in May did Stefansson arrive to spend time in Ottawa and then he was hurried, for the entire expedition was waiting for him on the west coast. Brock, Desbarats, and Stefansson devoted the last days of May to arranging the final instructions to be issued,78 much to the chagrin of people like Anderson who had not received at any time any written orders or instructions while in Ottawa.79

Because the expedition was to be expanded and divided in two sections, Brock accepted Stefansson's suggestion that a second ship, the Alaska, be purchased.80 Stefansson himself was not happy with the prospects of having a split command which, it appears, was instigated by the upper echelons of the Geological Survey who were concerned about the possible neglect of their work for the sake of exploration. They really

77 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, VS to Desbarats, 23 May 1913.

78 PAC, Desbarats Diary, [entries for] 27, 28, 29 May 1913.

79 PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...."

80 PAC, Desbarats Diary, 29 May 1913.
wanted something entirely different from Stefansson—a scientific investigation of the stretch of seacoast around Coronation Gulf. The only connection with Stefansson's exploring plan was that his ship was to be used to get these scientists to their base of operations. Stefansson was not happy with the creation of a divided command in any shape or form:

Because it has been suggested that the expedition recruit among its members certain representatives of government departments who shall not be fully under the command of the man at the time in charge of this section to which they are detailed, I would suggest that you might make some inquiries from Mr. Murray in regard to the Shackleton Antarctic expedition, where a similar situation existed.

Serious difficulties which have never gotten into the public press occurred on Shackleton's expedition on account of just such arrangements as are now proposed with regard to our expedition: in one case because the captain of the ship refused to follow the instructions of the commander of the expedition; and in several cases because scientific men had special agreements with the expedition or because they had been allowed to carry scientific apparatus which was either their own personal property or the property of some person or organization other than the expedition.81

His warning went unheeded, for although the final instructions did give Stefansson overall command, the expedition was divided into sub-groupings with scientific work relating to geology, geography, anthropology, and biology under the direction of the Geological Survey, and the scientific staff would report to the Geological Survey.82 The sub-parties

81PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, VS to Desbarats, 14 May 1913.

82PAC, RG42, 84-2-1/vol. 1, Memorandum for Instructions [for Canadian Arctic Expedition], n.d. [probably late May, 1913].
were to use orthodox methods in their investigations following closely the usual procedures adopted by the Geological Survey.\textsuperscript{83} They were to stick to their particular projects and carry them out in no unusual fashion. According to Anderson, Stefansson was not pleased with the situation:

[Stefansson] stated that it was desirable for the expedition to accomplish work of value, and that if the opportunity offered [appeared] to do such work, that the leaders of the parties should not hesitate to go forward for the reason that such activities were not explicitly covered by instructions in advance. Instances were cited where former expeditions had failed to accomplish adequate results when opportunities had occurred on their voyages, through lack of initiative of commanders, and their relying too closely upon detailed orders from Ottawa, which in the nature of things would not cover all possible contingencies or possibilities.\textsuperscript{84} The failure to spell out Stefansson's or Anderson's relationship to the Southern Section and the Geological Survey, along with the other hasty preparations, could, and did, hurt the expedition.

Despite these drawbacks, Stefansson was confident that he could "wipe off the face of the earth a million miles of unexplored territory."\textsuperscript{85} Asked as to the possible commercial value of any new lands, he pointed out that

Two hundred years ago Canada was considered to be nothing better than a trapper's waste and a land of ice and snow. Sixty years ago Alaska was sold for a song and no one thought it was worth developing. Six years ago the nations refused to be bothered with

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84}PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...."

\textsuperscript{85}Ottawa Free Press, 27 May 1913.
Spitzbergen, and now its coal fields have made it coveted by all. It is not beyond possibility that the new lands to the north, if there are any, will be of value some day.\footnote{Toronto Globe, 30 May 1913.}

This argument from analogy was a Stefansson trademark, which was appealing on the surface but dangerous if applied to any and all situations. Here was a theme Stefansson would extend to embrace all northern territories in Canada, which he hoped to popularize, and which can properly be identified with the name Stefansson. The year was 1913; all Stefansson had to do was prove himself.

* * *

Stefansson had built his second expedition into an imposing edifice, apparently succeeding beyond all his imagination; he appeared to have the backing of an agency, the Canadian government, with unlimited resources. He had freed himself of the tight financial controls of the American organizations with their limited funds. The talents that created such large enterprise from "scratch" combined sophisticated manoeuvring, knowing the right people, using his full powers of argument and personality, as well as his new-found reputation. Before his powers all obstacles seemed to disappear; he could not be denied, and he sensed he was
on the threshold of acquiring unlimited influence with those men—particularly in Canada—who made policy and controlled the public purse strings.

Yet in Stefansson's striving for security and adequate backing for his new expedition, something of his own goals were lost. By force of circumstances—the struggle to acquire backers—he compromised his desires to continue and refine his ethnological pursuits in exchange for a grandiose expedition geared mainly to geographical exploration. The price was a costly one in other ways as well, for along his new route, Stefansson would lose the support of a staunch ally, R.M. Anderson, who would remain a thorn in his side hereafter. And Stefansson's actions would be criticized by his opponents who, rightly or wrongly, believed him to be less a scientist and more a promoter.

For its part, the Canadian government was somewhat derelict in leaving the planning and organization of so complex an enterprise to Stefansson and Anderson, whose experience in the field was limited to equipping and operating a two-man expedition, not one with over two dozen individuals, and disposing of funds that were smaller than one-one hundredth of those the new expedition was to entail. Stefansson, in particular, was not the sort of man who could devote concentrated attention to minute and petty details. In the spring of 1913, he appeared too busy with publishers and conventions to attend to his proper duties. So eager was the Canadian government
to have its own expedition that it acted somewhat imprudently and rashly in taking over Stefansson's project virtually intact. The expedition was further expanded, but there was no attempt to think to think out a new integrated programme. The Geological Survey was merely attached to Stefansson's enterprise with little thought being given to details of command or logistic support. The ensuing haste and flurry and internal contradictions of the structure and objectives of the organization would leave their mark. Even before the Canadian Arctic Expedition reached the Arctic, it began to crumble.
CHAPTER VI
BREAKDOWN

Assembling the Canadian Arctic Expedition was one thing; getting it to work properly was another. There were storm warnings on the northern horizon, some of them Stefansson's doing, some not. True, the Expedition would accomplish much and be of monumental significance in terms of research, new territory discovered, and in terms of a planned scientific approach to northern mysteries; however, one will always speculate as to whether or not these achievements would have been greater had not the members of the Expedition fallen out amongst themselves for, before long, serious rifts appeared. Stefansson found himself engaged in a bitter fight with R.M. Anderson and most of the scientific staff of the Geological Survey. The scope of his authority would be challenged, for his opponents placed much weight on the specific instructions received from the Geological Survey as opposed to what they considered the more nebulous and sometimes inconsistent general instructions. In their eyes at least, Stefansson's actions during the first year of the Expedition became suspect
and the aims of the Expedition were sullied by a man whose motives, they believed, were less than scientific. This chapter, then, is an examination of this falling out between groups and individuals, and of their respective positions. In a sense, one might argue that each side was right; the confrontations became a question of how each faction perceived the "truth", this perception being sometimes more important in human relationships than the objectively-determined truth itself. The dissensions and general disillusionment which set in can be attributed partly to Stefansson's character and aspirations, partly to differing ideas as to who was responsible to which department, and partly to the disaffection of Stefansson's closest friend and ally, R.M. Anderson. The tensions and controversies that abounded during the Canadian Arctic Expedition were to haunt Stefansson for the rest of his Canadian career.

Dissatisfaction began in Ottawa amongst several members of the Geological Survey which had attached itself to the Expedition, enlarging its staff from six scientists to fifteen. R.W. Brock, along with his lieutenant, O.E. LeRoy, were understandably intent on protecting the interests of the Geological Survey, despite the fact that the formal instructions gave over-all authority to the Naval Service. Brock, of course, had been chiefly responsible for the government getting into the expedition at all; the Geological Survey's
affairs included natural and human history as well as
geological investigations, and Brock did not want to see
priority given to exploration solely. This attitude was
prevalent amongst members of the Geological Survey staff who
were anxious that they and their department be given as
much latitude as possible. Many must have shared the
sentiments of K.G. Chipman, the Southern Section's topographer,
which were penned in the preface to his diary:

This book is the diary of K.G. Chipman while geographer
with the Canadian Arctic Expedition. He has been
attached from the Geological Survey of Canada and
has in no way severed his connection with that
institution. His instructions for work are signed
by R.W. Brock...and on his return from the expedition
[he] returns to the Survey. His salary is paid by the
survey and the regulations of that institution together
with some few regulations in his instructions, apply to
his work while with the expedition. He is not bound,
unless it is of his own free will, by any expedition
or any other regulations pertaining to his work.

In other words, Chipman regarded himself as being directly re-
sponsible to one part of the Expedition, that outfitted by the
Geological Survey; in no way, he implied, could he be made to
answer to the Naval Service or to the Commander of the Expedition.

This, moreover, was the position of not just one member
of the Geological Survey. As later events were to underline,
the government scientists were acting as a group. And they
had been encouraged to take this position by their superiors
in the Geological Survey, particularly W.H. Boyd and O.E.

\[1\] CP, Chipman Diary, 15 June 1913.
LeRoy. These two gentlemen, having the ear of the Survey's director, R.W. Brock, were instrumental in formulating the Survey's policy within the Canadian Arctic Expedition. To Boyd and LeRoy's way of thinking—and later to some indeterminate extent that of R.G. McConnell, Brock's successor—the Naval Service had committed a grave error in allowing the Expedition to fall to Stefansson.

In our opinion the Naval Service showed great weakness and should instead have taken a strong hand and appointed one man of undoubted executive ability and well experienced too in outfitting Arctic Expeditions.

A comparison of the method of outfitting the Canadian Arctic Expedition with the methods used by Shackleton, Scott, or even Captain Bernier serves to show the entire lack of practical supervision by the Naval Service, and the lack of an efficient and qualified leader. The expedition actually started from Canada not knowing what they had on board the ship but yet knowing that they were incompletely equipped.

We considered the condition of affairs so serious before the men left Ottawa, that we then approached Mr. Brock and recommended that he withdraw Messrs. O'Neill, Chipman and Cox from the expedition pointing out the improbability of these men being able to reach their base without waste of valuable time. We offered, if given the opportunity to place these men in their field of work independent of Stefansson's expedition by August 1st, 1913. This proposal was not entertained....

Messrs, Chipman and Cox were made aware of our views regarding the apparent lack of the necessary qualifications of the leader. They continually sought our advice which was freely given and it was to our regret that we were not in a position to take the necessary measures to withdraw them from the expedition.³

²PAC, RMA/20, LeRoy to Brock, n.d. [probably early May, 1913].

LeRoy went further and questioned the scope and validity of Stefansson's authority, as well as his administrative talents. He argued that Stefansson "only assumed 'full responsibility' theoretically and showed himself lacking in executive ability and irresponsible." These contentions contributed to the falling out between Stefansson and the scientists of the Geological Survey.

Boyd and LeRoy were so intransigent when it came to the question of Stefansson that in 1914, when it was feared that Stefansson was lost and Desbarats had suggested that the government should send out a search expedition, both W.H. Boyd and O.E. LeRoy, stated categorically that enough Survey lives had already been lost on the *Karluk*. This made it "imperative that the Survey shall not allow other of its members to take any risks out of the ordinary to rescue Stefansson, whose life, to put it quite pointedly, is not worth it."  

It is not difficult to see that the Geological Survey was very upset about the Expedition as conceived and enlarged, and on top of that, having to answer to the Naval Service and to Stefansson. The Survey, like "interested members of the Naval Service", could not change the nature of the decisions taken by the government. The agency had tried to manoeuvre

---


5 *PAC, RMA/20, Boyd and LeRoy to McConnell, 29 October 1914.*

6 *PAC, RMA/20, Memo by O.E. LeRoy, n.d.*
itself out of the predicament by getting Brock and Desbarats to agree that Survey members were to employ standard Survey procedures in their work and answer directly to their Department on matters of research. This at least might help smooth the waters.

On the west coast most of the Geological Survey men, about to head off to the Arctic from Victoria, became despondent and their enthusiasm for the adventure waned each time they turned their eyes toward the Karluk which symbolized to them the pre-history of the Canadian Arctic Expedition and its probable fate. Chipman, whose disposition and views were to mirror the Survey's pessimistic convictions, was perhaps the most eloquent in damning the vessel. The Karluk possessed a grimy appearance: "There she was piled high with fresh meat, vegetables, snowshoes, skins, alcohol drums, canoes, and many and varied boxes and cases" and the entrances to the cabins were blocked with bales of nets, boxes and wire rope. But she was no great prize for "engineers, mates, the cook, and everybody condemn her." The new steering gear and re-fitted engine were in the habit of breaking down. "Time has simply increased

7 CP, Chipman Diary, 17 June 1913.
8 CP, Chipman Diary, 18 June 1913.
9 CP, Chipman Diary, 28 June 1913.
10 CP, Chipman Diary, [entries for 23] and 26 June 1913.
Captain Bartlett's condemnation of the Karluk. She is supposed to do seven knots and we perhaps average five for the trip."\textsuperscript{11} The chief engineer, Munroe, pointed out that the Karluk was a brigantine whaler, with an auxiliary "coffee pot of an engine ... never intended to run more than two days at a time."\textsuperscript{12} Her engines were virtually useless; when she ran into a piece of driftwood the ship, being unable to push it out of the way, was forced to stop, then go astern,\textsuperscript{13} and she fared no better in her first encounters with ice.\textsuperscript{14} It was even hinted that prior to purchase by the government a naval expert engaged by the Hudson's Bay Company "did not consider the Karluk as a safe ship for freight cartage."\textsuperscript{15} Apparently, both Captain Pederson, who had recommended her to Stefansson, and Captain Mogg told expedition members that the Karluk was not built for Arctic work, but solely for North Pacific sealing.\textsuperscript{16} According to Chipman at least, the Karluk inspired little confidence amongst her crew and passengers.

\textsuperscript{11} CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.

\textsuperscript{12} CP, Chipman Diary, 2 July 1913.

\textsuperscript{13} CP, Chipman Diary, 19 June 1913.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} PAC, RMA/20, LeRoy and Boyd to McConnell, 29 October 1914.

\textsuperscript{16} CP, Chipman Diary, 17 October 1913.
After the purchase of the Alaska for the Southern Party's use most of the men's time on the voyage from Victoria and Nome "was spent as longshoremen, opening cases and dividing the contents into two parts which were then repacked into boxes and labelled N or S."\textsuperscript{17} Yet it was impossible to locate material that would be destined for the Southern Party; no one knew where anything was because no system had been devised for numbering and stowage of the Karluk:\textsuperscript{18}  

The responsibility for systemizing things has never been given to any one man, and with so many doing a little and doing it differently, there has been no system or responsibility whatsoever. I guarantee that many commissions and duplications will reveal themselves in the next year or two. I was thoroughly mad today and once more said that if I had known three months ago all I know now, I'd never had been here, however, I am here and it is all experience.\textsuperscript{19}  

While in Victoria, Chipman failed to detect any enthusiasm in other members of the Expedition, "all the experienced and responsible members [were] thoroughly disgusted", having no confidence in Stefansson and little assurances of getting

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] CP, Chipman Diary, 9 July 1913. Stefansson, too corroborated Chipman's observation. Somehow, for example, fifteen kegs of vinegar found their way to the Karluk's hold. "I never looked at the provision list to see whether we have more in other parts of the ship, but even 15 kegs are, in my opinion enough for 15 years." Also "[o]wing, no doubt, to the hurry in which the work was done, a good many of the boxes repacked by our men at Esquimault when the division [of goods] was made between the northern and southern parties, were either poorly packed or, in some cases, half empty...we have had a good deal of trouble and difficulty in finding certain articles that got stowed underneath the other cargo.... SC,CAE/Desbarats file-1913, VS to George Phillips [Naval Stores Officer, Esquimalt], 30 October 1913.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
good work done. 20

Disillusionment with the Karluk was matched by the Geological Survey staff's evaluation of their commander, Stefansson. At Nome, aside from having trouble with Anderson's distraught wife 21 who accompanied her husband, Stefansson faced a confrontation of disgruntled and soured men. He was to make light of the whole affair later, claiming that it was a simple matter of scientific men worrying about petty matters such as having enough water to take a bath, or their refusal to believe that fresh water could be obtained from the top of old salt water ice. 22 Never once did he mention the seriousness of the confrontation or issues at stake.

Yet at a general meeting in Nome, the spokesmen for the men, James Murray for the Northern Party and K.G. Chipman for the Southern, corralled Stefansson, posing fundamental questions about the expedition, "questions très graves, sur lesquelles nous n'éutions nullement fixés, et auxquelles il était indispensable qu'il répondit." 23 The questions were

20 CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.

21 See below p. 221.

22 Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pp. 33-34; also, Stefansson, Discovery, p. 154-55.

23 PAC, RMA/1, Henri Beauchat to C.M. Barbeau [of the Geological Survey], n.d.
practical ones which the men felt had to be answered: food supplies for the Southern Party, clothing, sleeping bags; headquarters for the Southern Party huts, travelling equipment (sledges, dogs, sledging provisions), fuel, communication between bases, mail, coordination of the work of the Southern Party; and authority to trade and purchase locally, articles necessary for the ethnologists, Beauchat and Jenness\textsuperscript{24}-questions which Chipman in particular had raised in Ottawa where "his answers are the same now as then."\textsuperscript{25} Stefansson "could not tell us where the Southern base would be...his idea is still that it should be where there is fuel and game--efficiency of work is entirely secondary,"\textsuperscript{26} Chipman recorded in his diary. It must be admitted that Stefansson failed to expand his ideas to adapt to the new circumstances of the Expedition. Apparently, Stefansson was taken aback by this confrontation. He not only considered Chipman a "kicker", but he informed his inquisitors that they were "impertinent",\textsuperscript{27} that they had no business to ask such questions, and that they should have confidence in him.\textsuperscript{28} As Beauchat reported "[d]e plus Stefansson

\textsuperscript{24} Actually only the ethnologists received satisfactory replies from Stefansson. CP, Chipman Diary, 10 July 1913.

\textsuperscript{25} CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.

\textsuperscript{26} CP, Chipman Diary, 10 July 1913.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.
a pris un air très blessé et nous a fait clairement comprendre qu'il considèrait cet interrogatoire comme attentatoire à son autorité." 29

Those most upset by Stefansson's position were certain members of the Northern Party, particularly Murray, the oceanographer. Stefansson intimated quite forcefully that he intended to put the Northern Party's ship, Karluk, into the ice, and the general feeling was that she would never come out and would be crushed by the relentless, unforgiving pressure. 30 Murray was certain that if this were done all his work would be ruined, and he might lose his life. 31 He was therefore anxious that the Northern Party should establish a base on shore as well as on board the Karluk. Stefansson's response shocked all concerned, for he ignored Murray's pleas and stated that lives were secondary to the attainment of the objectives of the Expedition. 32 In 1921, Stefansson would write that he was one of those who think the fighting of the Great War worth while not so much to attain what was attained

29 PAC, RMA/1, Beauchat to Barbeau, n.d.

30 Ibid. Also CP, Chipman Diary, 11 July 1913. Although we only have Barbeau's and Chipman's word for it here, Stefansson had told Desbarats earlier that it was quite possible that he would put the Karluk into the ice. PAC, RG42, 82-2-3/vol. 2, VS-Desbarats, 23 June 1913. See p. 165.

31 CP, Chipman Diary, 11 June 1913.

32 Ibid. Stefansson's statement was corroborated by William McKinlay who made the same notation on 12 July 1913. Enclosed in a note to Anderson. PAC, RMA/5, McKinlay to Anderson, 10 April 1922.
as to prevent what has been prevented. But I could never see how any one can extol the sacrifice of a million lives for political progress who condemns the sacrifice of a dozen lives for scientific progress. For the advance of science is but the advance of truth, and "The Truth shall make you Free".  

He tried unsuccessfully to dump Murray in favour of Johanssen, but the latter also refused to accompany the Northern Party because of Stefansson's lack of concern. Stefansson pointed out he could order Johanssen to accompany the Northern Section but would not use compulsion; instead he implied he could enlarge Johanssen's work role since "he did not feel bound by his instructions and...would reverse them if he chose." Johanssen, although anxious enough to do more important work, refused the carrot. To appease Murray, on 17 July Stefansson promised to place another vessel, the Mary Sachs, at his disposal for oceanographic work. On the very next day, however, Stefansson told Chipman that the Sachs would be used primarily to establish a base at the "upper end" of Prince Albert Sound.

33 Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, p. 73.
34 PAC, RMA/1, Beauchat to Barbeau, n.d.
35 CP, Chipman Diary, 12 July 1913.
36 CP, Chipman Diary, 10 July 1913.
37 CP, Chipman to Boyd, 18 July 1913.
Stefansson's ambiguous position and manner generated considerable tension between himself and the rest of the Expedition. It should have been obvious to Stefansson—as it was to become later when the Expedition went from crisis to crisis—that as far as Arctic expeditions were concerned, he was a one-man operator, an improviser, lacking the requisite administrative ability to run such a large, highly-structured venture. His apparent lack of concern for the overall operation may have stemmed from a lack of interest in its all-embracing scope. After all, the Southern Section had been tacked on after Stefansson's already heavily compromised original expedition had been taken over by the Dominion government, and was not even going to do the kind of work he wanted in the area he wanted.

In the light of the unsatisfactory results of the "confrontation" at Nome and the failure of the scientific staff to secure the assurances they desired, the Expedition members decided to make the best of the situation. Members of the Southern Party moved goods from the Karluk to the Alaska, and struck out for Collinson Point. Once the Southern Section established its own base camp at Collinson Point there was the nagging feeling that Stefansson would not leave them alone. For one thing members of the Anderson section felt that once his Northern Section was established, Stefansson
would come to the Southern Party and take charge. This was totally unacceptable to the men of the Geological Survey because of what they considered to be his unsatisfactory attitude and their own immediate responsibilities to their Ottawa principals. As early as July, 1913, the members of the Geological Survey had forecast the turn of events and had made up their minds on this issue long before the Expedition headed North. Their determination to oppose such an intervention to the point of resigning and heading South if it occurred, worked, as we shall see, to their advantage.

And return he did. Captain Bartlett, contrary to Stefansson's instructions and contrary to the experience of whalers in the waters north of Alaska, had not kept the Karluk close to shore when on 13 August 1913 she became caught in the ice and grounded.

There was a general feeling on board that the Karluk would remain fast close to shore for the duration of the

---

38 Ibid. The Southern Section had eight individuals involved in full-time scientific investigation, and no assistants. The Southern Section argued that the organization of Stefansson's section made the Commander redundant—unless it encountered new Eskimo peoples on whom Stefansson could apply his talents. Jenness was to make the ethnological investigations around Coronation Gulf. It was assumed by members of the Southern Party that with no new natives discovered—or if the Karluk were lost—Stefansson would become merely a general assistant and make his way back to Anderson's headquarters.

39 CP, Chipman Diary, 10 July 1913.

40 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, 17 October 1913.
winter, and the crew made preparations accordingly. On 20 September 1913, Stefansson, never content with inactivity, along with a number of companions—Eskimo and white (Diamond Jenness and George Wilkins, later Sir Hubert Wilkins)—left the Karluk in the hope of finding game to provision the ship; the excursion was to take approximately ten days. The contemporary evidence suggests that this was a normal hunting trip, but with the passage of time Stefansson's detractors would accuse him of abandoning his ship because he knew full well that it was in great danger.

---

41 SC, Jenness Diary, 20 September 1913.

42 Bartlett recorded in his diary that, upon leaving, Stefansson ordered the captain to erect beacons should the ship move, and indicated that the party would be back aboard "within ten days if no accident happens." PAC, RG42, 84-2-27, Diary of R.A. Bartlett, 20 September 1913. Presumably, Stefansson meant "accident" to refer to his own party. In August 1914, when Stefansson indulged in some soul-searching over the Karluk's disappearance, there is strong evidence to suggest that he wished he had never left her. PAC, Stefansson Diary, 1 August 1914.

43 For example, Mrs. Anderson wrote to her husband about a conversation that she had had with Frederick W. Maurer, a member of the Karluk. According to Maurer, Stefansson was visibly upset by the Karluk's situation: he would not eat, appeared intimidated by Bartlett, and wandered aimlessly about the ship. Maurer claimed he had overheard a conversation between the Commander and Jack Hadley, in which Stefansson definitely expressed his fear for the loss of the ship, the end of the expedition, and an adverse world reaction. PAC, RMA/3, Mrs. Anderson to R.M. Anderson, 27 June 1915. A man of Stefansson's ambition could well have expressed such sentiments, but to conclude—as many did—that Stefansson abandoned ship from such evidence is folly, particularly when such testimony was given after the fact, and perhaps influenced by the subsequent course of the expedition. Nor can more credence be placed in a report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. They implied that Stefansson's actions had been suspicious. A report which
Nevertheless, it was Stefansson's misfortune to be away when the weather turned for the worse and a violent storm carried the Karluk away on its ill-fated drift. In August, 1913, the Karluk would be trapped in the ice off Alaska and would be caught in a northwesterly drift never to be seen again. On 11 January 1914, she was crushed by the ice pressure and abandoned. Some of the crew reached nearby Wrangel Island, while others struck out on their own to find safety.\footnote{44}In all, however, eleven of these men would die in one fashion or another, including five of the scientific party.\footnote{45} Subsequently a charge was made that these events had "resulted from the Karluk's being 'unsound'."\footnote{46}

The Karluk's disappearance left Stefansson without a crew and, in reality, without the Northern Section, his part of the Expedition. Given his resourcefulness, things might have worked out if he had been in an region rich in ethnographic material and thus able to use his scientific talents, but the north shore of Alaska could never offer him

\footnote{44}{For an account of the fate of the Karluk and its crew see R.A. Bartlett and R.T. Hale, The Last Voyage of the Karluk (Toronto, 1916). Also, pp. 162-63.}

\footnote{45}{See Appendix I, "A Who's Who of the Canadian Arctic Expedition."

\footnote{46}{Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, p. 47.}
anything like the relatively untouched Eskimos of Coronation Gulf.

In the meantime, Stefansson began working on another plan to salvage something out of a venture which he now considered on the brink of failure, for his prestige and self-esteem, and for the sake of the Expedition. In this effort, he was to encounter further hostility from the Southern Section who, quite understandably, feared undue interference. The main work of the party on board the Karluk was to have been the exploration of the region west of the Parry Islands, particularly west and northwest of Prince Patrick Island. Without the Karluk and its support this was impossible, but by late October 1913, Stefansson had formulated a new plan:

> Now that we find ourselves situated as we are, we shall try to do as much scientific work as there is opportunity for. The two main features of my plans for the winter are a sledge journey north from Barter Island and the exploration of the Mackenzie Delta. It seems to me that a sledge journey north from Barter Island may possibly prove of considerable geographic interest....

> If we were to attain a point only 100 miles

---

47 In a confidential letter to George Phillips, Naval Stores Officer at Esquimalt, Stefansson would say, "I will do anything, almost, towards success, for I am pledged to that end to the government and myself and my friends. I have the interests of the Southern Party as much at heart as those of the Northern." SC, CAE/General-1914 file, Stefansson to Phillips, 14 February 1914. See also Stefansson's earlier views regarding his drive for success, the necessity to prove himself for his own self-esteem, pp.58, 120, 37-38,132; in connection with his views about the success or failure of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, see pp. 197-98, 244, 264,
from shore, we might, by doing so, determine the edge of the continental shelf at least, while if we find ice conditions favorable, 300 miles does not seem too much to hope for. So far as I know, no vessel has been over 50 miles from shore in the longitude of Barter Island.

The MacKenzie is the largest river in Canada, and it is likely to attain[...] sometime a commercial importance second only to that of the St. Lawrence. It seems likely that a careful survey of the more important of [the MacKenzie Delta's] channels will bring to light a route which will be safe for a steamer drawing 6½ feet which it could carry all the way, that is, 1500 miles south to Smith's rapids. As it is impossible to tell when the MacKenzie may spring into an importance comparable to that of the Yukon, it seems that the charting of its delta and the soundings of its channels, is a work of great practical value, for freight can be brought much more cheaply from such specific ports as Victoria or Vancouver to the lower portion of the MacKenzie Valley than it can to the south down the River, so long as a canal is not dug past the Smith's Rapids. If rich mineral discoveries do not bring the MacKenzie into sudden prominence, there is bound to be a steady, but slow, growth brought about by the non-mineral resources of the country.48

With this in mind Stefansson set about to prepare for his new scheme and wrote to the Naval Service in full confidence they would assent, for, although the plans were altered, they did tally with the latitude given in the original instructions.49

Then without any apparent warning, he appeared in mid-December at Collinson Point and threw members of the Southern Party into a turmoil: "What we had always expected might happen,

48PAC, RG42, 84-2-21/vol. 1, VS to [presumably] Dr. J. Scott Kellett [Secretary of Royal Geographic Society, London, England], 29 October 1913.

49Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, p. 72.
had happened. The day following his arrival, Stefansson held a three hour conference on board the Mary Sachs with Chipman, Cox, O'Neill, and Johanssen, but they found Stefansson's reassurances that he would not interfere in the affairs of the party unsatisfactory. They were unimpressed with his Mackenzie delta surveying scheme, which Chipman—the man Stefansson wanted for the task—privately scoffed at as being "work of a lifetime." It was ironical, and an indication of Stefansson's inability to judge character, that he was totally unaware of Chipman's disposition, for he concluded that initially at least, he commanded the topographer's confidence and enthusiasm for the work. Chipman, whose strong views seem to reflect best the feelings of the Southern Party in general, was certain that Stefansson could not help but interfere:

He is [the] leader of the whole expedition, the men look on him as the man who hired them, and Anderson has been accustomed to giving in to him. Aside from the question of which is the stronger character[,] I am very certain that if Stefansson comes in here, he will become the real boss of this party. He may not have any intentions of assuming control of interfering in any way but the men will go to him and even if he refers most of the cases to Anderson he is sure (it is his nature) in many of them to give an opinion not a decision. To the men there is something of a glamour about him and they will go to him whether

50 CP, Chipman Diary, 14 December 1913.

51 CP, Chipman Diary, 15 December 1913.

52 Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pp. 92-93.
he wants it or not. Even in this one day here men have gone to him and he has not only given them the decisions but he has criticized several things and has taken steps to see that they are different.... He is perhaps right in these things but he is plainly taking authority out of Anderson's hands.... if Anderson has any backbone he will either make Stefansson assume full control or absolutely none. No compromise can be satisfactory situated as we are.53

Chipman and other members of the Southern Party never wavered from this position and when a similar situation arose in February and March they were to impress it upon Anderson, demanding that he take a bold stand while assuring him that the members of the Geological Survey would stand behind such a position.54 Stefansson's presence would be "incidious" and lower their efficiency and quality of work.55 After having read over Stefansson's instructions and the personal instructions from Brock to his men, Chipman became convinced that "Command of the Southern Party is distinctly given to Dr. Anderson. In our personal instructions there is nothing to indicate that we are in any way responsible to anyone except to our department and the leader of the Southern party."56

This view was consistent with that of other members of the Southern Party.

53CP, Chipman Diary, 15 December 1913.

54CP, Chipman Diary, 14 February 1913.

55CP, Chipman Diary, 17 December 1913. Stefansson soon became aware of the Southern Section's point of view and disposition which he considered misguided. See SC, CAE/General-1914 file, VS to G. Phillips, 4 February 1914.

56Ibid.
Party and with that of their superiors in the Geological Survey in Ottawa. Moreover, their views, like Stefansson's, may not have been impartial or objective; each side responded in subjective fashion to the issues at hand. This was to be the root of much of the discord.

Chipman was to remain quite unhappy about Stefansson's position and his presence. He and others were alarmed over the prospect that the Mary Sachs--bought by Stefansson for the use of the Southern Party--would now be diverted for Stefansson's exploration of the Beaufort Sea.\textsuperscript{57} Chipman sympathized with Anderson, his chief, who was also very disappointed with Stefansson's arrival. "He [Anderson] says it was on the condition that he had entire control of this party that he came up here."\textsuperscript{58} Both Anderson and Chipman were amazed that Stefansson considered the safety of ships and crew secondary to pursuing the objectives of the expedition.\textsuperscript{59} Now Stefansson appeared anxious to include Anderson's men in his own expeditions. Anderson for one could not concur in Stefansson's view that the end justified the means: "[Anderson]

\textsuperscript{57} CP, Chipman Diary, 26 December 1913.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} CP, Chipman Diary, 16 December 1913. See also pp. 184-85, 190 footnote 47.
did not think it necessary to sacrifice his self-respect to attain ends."\textsuperscript{60}

To Anderson and Chipman, Stefansson lacked something every gentleman should have, integrity and dignity. To Anderson, Stefansson was unscrupulous. To Chipman—and perhaps to others—Stefansson was not only unscrupulous but debauched. When he apprpoached Stefansson and protested about the vice and prostitution around them, and members of the Expedition having relations with the Eskimo women, he was upset that Stefansson should show little concern. All Chipman could say was that he regretted "that some precaution was not taken to have an expedition of this size sent out by the government composed of men of some moral character,"\textsuperscript{61} and he included Stefansson in this group. Moreover, "he doesn't play the game with his cards on the table and consequently we are suspicious of him."\textsuperscript{62}

He repeated...that Peary had told him that he should never talk things over with the men but should simply give them orders and expect the men to follow them implicitly and unquestionably. He says he prefers to talk things over and to be frank with with the men. My [Chipman] estimate of the situation is that for a leader of an expedition there are two types of men—1. a commander who will issue orders as orders and they will be carried out as such. The other is the man who is a leader and whom the men follow and co-operate with because of personal loyalty and confidence. The first type necessitates men who will carry out orders implicitly and applies to small expeditions with a definite object and of the college student type. The personnel of this expedition and its wide advertisement as having the largest scientific staff and men who are specialists in the

\textsuperscript{60} CP, Chipman Diary, 26 December 1913.

\textsuperscript{61} CP, Chipman Diary, 16 December 1913.

\textsuperscript{62} CP, Chipman Diary, 11 March 1914.
line precludes its being classed in the first type. Stefansson says he does not wish to be such a commander and it seems to me that he is failing to follow in under the second head....there [is] on the part of the men no feeling of confidence or loyalty and consequently we follow only so far as our interests are concerned. What is needed with the staff we have is an efficient business manager and this he is too much of a dreamer to be.63

This attitude had been with the scientific staff since Victoria, if anything, becoming more determined with each small provocation--real or supposed. Chipman believed that Stefansson had to be put down, before his actions, even his mere presence, hurt the Southern expedition irreparably: "I believed that if VS were confronted flatly and definitely he would back down and matters would be adjusted. I said it would have to be a showdown and that it was better to have it now. I was ready to stand behind anything he [Anderson] did."64 If and when Anderson acted he would not be acting on his own but with the collective and imposing support of his staff.

All the time this feeling was hardening, Stefansson, with full knowledge of their disposition, went about his revised plans as though nothing was happening, heightening tensions and suspicions. The Mackenzie delta project was let slide, only to be revived later with much indecision by

63 Ibid.

64 CP, Chipman Diary, 14 February 1914.
Stefansson who could not decide who should undertake it. 65

It was natural though that Stefansson should follow through with the second revised scheme, the ice expedition into the unknown Beaufort Sea. Perhaps he sensed that this activity would give the Expedition the success and publicity that could not be achieved with just the routine scientific work of the Southern expedition. Stefansson seemed convinced that the work of the Southern expedition would not be enough to make the enterprise respectable, that the government had to be given something for its money and to ease its concern over the sovereignty question. For instance, in February, 1915, the explorer indicated that Anderson's position of the previous year had been damaging to both of them for,

by reducing my chances of success [Anderson] has reduced that of all of us. Had luck favored us with "land" or some other spectacular triumph, we would all have ridden in on a tidal wave of success. Likely, I would, perforce, have received the lion's share, but [Anderson] would have received his also. Even the most ultra-scientists are influenced by the paper they read at breakfast as much as by their technical journals. 66

65 Stefansson mentioned to Chipman in early March, 1914 that in the previous December he had in mind employing two men to help Chipman with the Mackenzie delta work; Stefansson admitted he kept silent about this prospect at the time because he was not sure that he could obtain their services. According to Chipman, if Chipman had known of the prospect of assistance at an earlier stage he might have given the project serious consideration instead of scoffing at the idea. CP, Chipman Diary, 11 March 1914. Nevertheless, some good work was done in the delta by Chipman and John R. Cox, the other topographer. See, R.M. Anderson, "Report of the Southern Division of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913", in Report of the Department of Naval Service, (Ottawa, 1917).

66 PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915].
Only by August, 1915, after completing some successful sledging trips, could Stefansson confidently feel that, despite the alleged roadblocks placed in his path and despite the lower priority given the northern work after the Karluk's disappearance, the expedition is not going to be a failure after all, not even the northern programme.  

Matters came to a head in mid-February and early March, 1914, in one of the most serious confrontations between Stefansson and the rest of the expedition based on the mainland. Over the winter months, Stefansson, with the ice trip always in the forefront, had been busy trying to scrape together, in essence, a new Northern Party from the resources that remained after the Karluk's disappearance. To this end he had been buying up entire stores from local agents whenever possible; in the case of two stores to the sum of, roughly, $20,000. Stefansson realized this was a large sum of money, "but I felt that the articles secured and the things they would enable us to attempt were worth it to the expedition.

67 Sc, CAE/Directives and Orders-1915, VS to Anderson, 27 August 1915. Yet within three months of this statement he was in one of his melancholy moods. Again on another of his birthdays, as was his wont, he lamented "I am 36 today—half an ordinary lifetime, and very little accomplished." PAC, Stefansson Diary, 3 November 1915.

68 See pp. 235-37.
and to the government." Soon after, armed with a note from the Comptroller of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, advising their posts that "every assistance be given to the members of the Expedition" Stefansson, claiming he was "without supplies", took an additional half ton of rations from the police stores at Herschel Island. In the process a number of stories—perhaps, more correctly, rumours—were circulated about Stefansson's activities. His actions, we are told, were placing him in a bad light with men like Phillips who was alienated by Stefansson's brusque and cavalier attitude toward the Police. He gave Chipman the impression of spending much of his time bragging about his new book, My Life With the Eskimo, which had been published after the Canadian Arctic Expedition had left Victoria. In the eyes of the Police, according to Chipman, Stefansson seemed to care little about the Karluk which had not been heard from. This apparent lack of concern did not improve the Police's opinion of him. Chipman, no paragon of objectivity

69 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, January, 1915, [lengthy narrative covering Stefansson's actions from February, 1914 to 22 March 1914, including comments regarding buying of provisions in December 1913].

70 PAC, RG42, 84-2-31/vol. 1, L. Foresture [Comptroller] to Desbarats, 28 May 1913.


72 CP, Chipman Diary, 4 April 1914.
seemed to delight in such stories, and his pettiness, not to mention his streak of racism, is an example of the sort of thing that plagued the whole affair:

I learned here that VS completely suceeded in "getting the goat of everybody here" [Herschel Island] and at Fort McPherson. It is strange but no one seems to have a good word for him; seldom have I seen a man for whom there are fewer good words than is the case for VS along this coast. It may be partially due to the climate or the men here but rather most of it must be due to VS himself. Inspector Phillips says he started out when he came here by telling him the incident of Fitzgerald and the matches and of Inspector Bates and the lunatic at Baily Island when VS wanted the RNWMP to send there for a lunatic [Eskimo] and Bates did not do so; and told how he practically had both these men removed. Inspector Phillips is not the kind of man to [be] bluffed or threatened by any intimations of such power. Everyone says Phillips is very strict and conscientious in his duty; and he wont let VS run the police force for him. The police were talking of taking butter and jam on their patrol to the fort and VS said "OK don't take any for me, I don't want such luxuries"; he ate so much of what the police were taking for themselves that the patrol reached the fort short not only of luxuries but of any grub at all. Several times at the island VS was talking in the barracks to the white men and a native came in and he abruptly broke off without apology and talked with the native. This seems to seriously offend class distinction....Everyone here talks of the waste of grub from VS's outfit while on the road--this waste going to the natives under his eyes. A 50 lb box of hard bread was used up in two days. Of the luxuries VS said "Oh the poor natives, they seldom have such things--we must give them some," and the natives proceeded to help themselves. Soon white men are without butter, sugar, rice, etc. VS secured from the fort 200 boxes of flour for our use in the delta work. Of this 50 boxes reached Peterson's place the rest going to the natives. VS talks of how he loves the natives grub, yet he secures his full share of white man's food, and of luxuries such as butter and jam he seems to get more than his share. Evidently the grub pile is just about the most serious of all considerations in this country and a man has to be mighty big or else mighty well liked to get away with what VS is doing in that line. 73

73 Ibid.
As Cox reported, Stefansson seemed to have "an unfortunate knack of 'getting in the wrong' everywhere he goes." 74

Chipman and other members of the expedition could gloat over such stories and rumours in comfortable amusement, although they may have had some qualms about the expedition's credibility with the northern population. However, once Stefansson began (in February, 1914) to request supplies for his trip from the Belvedere, originally destined for the use of the Southern Section, they sat up and took notice: "if we let him go on we are doing so at the expense of our own work--to say nothing of our own reasonable comfort." 75 It was at this point that Anderson, with the support of other members of the Geological Survey, finally took a stand against what they believed to be encroachments on the success of their work.

When Stefansson's lieutenant, Storker T. Storkerson, arrived to collect goods and material for the ice foray--chisels, chronometers, dogs, sleds, and food--Anderson informed him that nothing could be spared. 76 Stefansson himself had not come since he had seen no need; he was sure his request would

74 PAC, RMA/13, John R. Cox to Mrs. Anderson, 7 July 1914.

75 CP, Chipman Diary, 10 February 1914.

76 SC, CAE/General-1914 file, Anderson to Storker T. Storkerson, 15 February 1914. Storkerson, like Stefansson, was a former member of the Anglo-American Expedition, and was well-versed in the technique of Arctic exploration.
be filled. Besides, he felt it necessary to go to Fort McPherson 'to get and send mail.' Later, some of his opponents claimed that such a move was a deliberate Stefansson tactic. In their opinion, Stefansson had never had any intention of coming in person: "It is much easier for him to shove it off on someone else such an unsatisfactory and thankless job." 

There was some truth to this observation. What, for example, was so much more important that required his presence at Fort McPherson rather than Collinson Point? Stefansson had known about the mood of the members of the Southern Party since December, despite his statement that he had not expected such a development, and had been careful not to cross swords with the Southern Party. As he reported afterwards, not only would he fail to get supplies unless he came in person, but the topographic section, namely Chipman, would not perform any Mackenzie delta survey work "until I came to Collinson Point and they would make it clear to me just what my position on the expedition was and receive assurances that their work would

---


78 CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915. In a later episode, Wilkins felt similarly and resented being used by Stefansson "as a go between". SC, Sir Hubert Wilkins Diary, 30 December 1915. See p. 264, ftn. 97.


80 SC, CAE/General-1914 file, VS to George Phillips [Naval Service functionary at Esquimault], 14 February 1914.
not be in future hampered or interfered with by me." 81 If the Expedition on the sea ice was to move at all Stefansson would have to go to Collinson Point. 82

Stefansson, to re-assert his authority, arrived at the Collinson Point camp on Sunday, 8 March, ready to do battle. After supper a delicate "conference was held lasting until


82 News of the impending falling out spread rapidly along the Arctic coast making Stefansson's position unenviable vis à vis white men and natives. White men, particularly those who had sold their supplies, thought that the government might not honour Stefansson's commitments, that he was too much of a risk and insisted on "an increased price as compensation." Le Bourdais, p. 83. Not only had Storkerson been refused the supplies requested by his commander, but he was finding it difficult to enlist natives to join the expedition. The native problem had really little connection with the 1913 situation, except to aggravate it. Ibid. It appears Stefansson had incurred the wrath of the Reverend C.E. Whittaker who had befriended the explorer on his previous Arctic exploits and had been unfairly treated by Stefansson who decried the unwholesome influence of missionary activity on the Eskimo. Stefansson, My Life With the Eskimo, pp. 370-422, 428. In any case, Whittaker had sent a letter to the natives of Herschel Island warning that "VS and some of those with him willfully and maliciously refused to believe in the work of God; they are bad after your women; look out for them; do not have anything to do with them." CP, Chipman Diary translation, 12 March 1914; the indictment was also recorded by Stefansson. PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/2, VS to Desbarats, 13 February 1914. In addition, Whittaker counter-attacked publicly in public lecture and print, denying that the missionary influence had been destructive. He claimed Stefansson had no use for religion and the Ten Commandments and charged that Stefansson had left a wife and child behind in the Arctic. "We know the lives that abandoned men live away from the law and public opinion... We should care as much about the Salvation of souls as Stefansson cares about the bodies." Toronto Globe, 12 June 1913.
3:00 AM the following morning." It is not clear who delivered the opening salvo, but, according to Chipman, Stefansson began
by telling us the history of the expedition and showing us that in conception and organization it was all his. He insisted that in their arrangements and under the instructions it was all his and that RMA was entirely the second in command....He insists that the plans and organization are his and his alone and that the scientific instructions were outlined by him.84

Stefansson ignored the argument that the revised, two-tiered organization and scientific instructions were prepared by O.E. LeRoy of the Geological Survey at the request of R.W. Brock,85 and suggested that as supreme commander he could change the programme of the Expedition to assure its success in any way he saw fit.86

Such an attitude upset all the Southern Section; the men simply wished to know where they stood in the overall plans, whatever they were to be, and they wanted it in writing.87 Neither Anderson nor the other members of the

83CP, Chipman Diary, 8 March 1914.

84Ibid. Stefansson also said much the same in a confidential letter to George Phillips: "No one realizes that it is all my expedition, that I formulated all this plan essentially...long before the government had anything to do with the expedition...." SC, CAE/General-1915 file, VS to George Phillips, 19 February 1915.

85CP, Chipman Diary, 8 March 1914. See also pp. 190,197-98, for Stefansson's attitude toward the success of the Expedition.

86PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Brock, 15 May 1914.

87CP, Chipman Diary, 8 March 1914.
Geological Survey would stand any longer for verbal orders "which often conflict and are too changeable...to work under with any degree of satisfaction."\textsuperscript{88} If Anderson were to take responsibility for his section he had to have written guarantees: "I don't care to have the man higher up in a position to shift responsibility when he chooses to change his mind or forget,"\textsuperscript{89} and Stefansson on occasion did have a convenient memory.\textsuperscript{90} Otherwise Anderson was willing to step down and let Stefansson run the entire show if he thought this would be more satisfactory. Stefansson refused, knowing that this would cause the bulk of the Southern Section to pick up and return to Ottawa.\textsuperscript{91} The conference reached its peak when an exasperated Anderson rebuked Stefansson in an emotional outburst in front of the other members of the Southern Section saying that "on their last expedition he had wasted three years

\textsuperscript{88}PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Brock, 15 May 1914.

\textsuperscript{89}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90}See p. 69 for Stefansson's awareness of his "imaginative power"; also, pp. 182-84 in connection with Stefansson's reporting of the Nome confrontation; Wilkins records that Stefansson's "Habit of misremembering on which he prides himself is a mighty convenient thing...." SC, Wilkins Diary, 30 December 1915.

\textsuperscript{91}PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, [Narrative of] January, 1915. It should be pointed out here that this lengthy narrative was designed to give Stefansson's version. In it, he faithfully related the objections of Anderson and the scientific staff, though he did not report some of Anderson's more scathing remarks as recorded by Chipman.
of his life[,] that he vowed that if he ever went with
[Stefansson] it would not be further than Coney Island[,] that
he had done best work when alone and that if they accomplished
anything it had been more by good luck than good management. 92

Anderson acknowledged that his authority was subordinate
to Stefansson in all respects but he suggested there were
occasions when a subordinate might refuse to continue consider-
ing him a man to be obeyed. 93 Stefansson's attempt to "raid"
the supplies and talent of the Southern Section was such a
time, for, to Anderson, the Canadian Arctic Expedition would
not be a scientific endeavour of the highest calibre if
Stefansson had his way.

Mr. Stefansson...made the remarkable statement that
the Expedition was not essentially scientific; that
scientific men were inclined to be narrow-minded
and engrossed in their own lines; that private in-
dividuals or a government would not finance a
scientific expedition on its own merit unless it
has the spirit of adventure to catch the public
interest. 94

In Anderson's eyes the Expedition was a vehicle to
promote the image of Stefansson, and in a way he was right,
considering some of Stefansson's aspirations. 95 Anderson
felt he had been entrusted by the government with the command
of the Southern Party, that he was responsible to the

92 CP, Chipman Diary, 8 March 1914.

93 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats [Narrative

94 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Brock, 15 May 1914.

95 See pp. 190, 197-98.
government, and would see to it that Stefansson did not waste supplies and equipment intended for scientific research in useless stunts. The members of the Southern Party were scientific men, he added, who had joined the Expedition hoping to do some good scientific work, and they disliked being interfered with by someone who was a "bull-con artist" with no appreciation of scientific values. The scientific staff, Anderson reputedly went on, were afraid he would make this Expedition a farce and laughing stock as he had done with the previous one, this time by making useless ice journeys over the Beaufort Sea, wasting good supplies for newspaper notoriety.\(^{96}\) To Stefansson, however, the ice journey over the Beaufort Sea was no stunt but a main feature of the original plans negotiated with the National Geographic Society, his first sponsor, and afterwards accepted by the Canadian Government. The Karluk might have disappeared, but the ice work would be continued once Stefansson had weighed both sides of the question and had made his decision: "Seeing that I was in command of the expedition...it seemed to me that [if] the resources of the expedition were still adequate for this exploration with some prospect of success I intended to attempt that exploration. I had considered all matters relating to the prospect of the whole expedition in a manner which seemed to me to be careful and I had decided that this

\(^{96}\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats [Narrative of] January 1915.}\)
ice work could be done without interfering seriously with the other work planned. 97 Without consultation, Stefansson had asserted his position and made the arbitrary decision which upset other members. He would take "volunteers"--even from the Southern Section--who were willing to live on a comparatively simple diet, and he would use equipment that the Southern Party could spare without impairing their prospects for successful work. Again, however, Stefansson was to decide what the Southern Section could spare, and this position left him open to charges of undermining the efforts of Anderson's section.

To Stefansson "the whole matter was only talk, and when the talking was over the plans of the expedition were just as they had been before...." 98 "...[T]he only matter to become serious was when I said I intended to take the [Mary] Sachs to Banks Island--as I had told Dr. Anderson in December I intended to do...." 99 The Mary Sachs had been purchased as a tender for either section, but with the Karluk gone Stefansson "now judged she was more needed by the northern than by the southern section". 100 Such issues caused many members to cry "foul". Stefansson gave the impression Anderson and company wanted to change the direction of the Northern work and were trying to thwart his programme and embarrass him, but

---

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
this was not true. His opponents could not have cared less what he did on his own, so long as his actions did not interfere with their work. The Expedition--its ships and supplies--they contended, was not his private property to do with as he wished.

Stefansson considered such opposition as a breach of discipline. Taking the initiative, and convinced of the correctness of his stand, he informed Ottawa that no action should be taken against Anderson and others--implying that he was disposed to be benevolent towards them. However, he suggested that Desbarats should bring the dissidents into line before another incident occurred:

I should suggest as for the best interests of the expedition, so long as you have confidence in my judgement, it is sufficient if it can be impressed on Dr. Anderson that he will be expected to attempt in good faith to carry out instructions given him by me and that the mere fact that he considers some other course wiser will not be considered an adequate excuse for disobedience unless it can be shown that grave conditions existed of which I had no knowledge when the instructions were issued. I consider it desirable, though less important, that the other members of the scientific staff understand they are under my command though they be on the southern section.101

The whole episode boiled down to two differing points of view--Stefansson's and the entire Southern Section--as to their respective rights to carry out their programmes. Both sides felt justified in their respective positions regarding priorities, but Stefansson considered the other position as mutinous, and, strictly speaking, it was. Whether or not it

101 Ibid.
was justifiable in terms of the overall purposes of the Expedition or the confused lines of authority under which the Expedition operated is another matter.

* * *

Stefansson had been visibly shaken by the confrontation at Collinson Point, especially by the position of his one-time friend and ally, Rudolph Anderson. It was hard for him to believe such a turn of events, and he offered the following explanation put in terms of personal antagonism rather than honest differences of opinion over the conduct of the Expedition and the status of the Commander in relation to the operation of the Southern Section:

I believe it to be true that Dr. Anderson believes himself to have been badly treated by me and that out of an expedition 1908-12 where both of us did much hard work, and he not the less of the two, he, the abler man as he believed, got much less credit than I. By brooding, these things have grown, and altho' I believe it to be the opinion of most of those associated with the two of us the winter of 1912-13 that I tried to get for Dr. Anderson all the credit and notice I could, I also believe it to be the opinion of those who know him and not me that I have deliberately deprived him of credit.... On our first expedition we often differed on matters of policy and I always carried forward my plans... It is therefore not difficult to sympathize to a degree at least in his feelings toward me. That they have carried him too far I am sure of and I am sorry for. I cannot see anything but that so far as he has hurt any individual he has hurt himself most of all for it does not seem likely that any thorough consideration will justify all he did. It is regrettably clear that he lessened by half at least the prospects of success and doubled the danger of the ice work of 1914 without benefitting any individual member of the expedition or any section of it.
I have had and still have a high regard for Dr. Anderson's ability along many lines and his character in many ways. It was, however, clearly a mistake, for which I am fully responsible, to take him with me on an expedition such as this.... the unfriendliness and lack of confidence which undoubtedly existed among the scientific staff rested on the fact that Dr. Anderson who knew did not like me and had no confidence in my scientific or practical judgement.

This summation of Anderson's alienation held more than a kernel of truth though it was not the whole story. The scientific members distrust of him had developed along a parallel course to Anderson's disillusionment, sometimes in contact with it, sometimes not. Rather than personal jealousy being the sole cause of Anderson's feelings, there appears to have been also, on his part, a change of perspective and a search for different values which, in the end, did not mesh with those of Stefansson as they had during the 1908-12 expedition. What is necessary now in the light of the seriousness of the breach and its effect on the Expedition and Stefansson's subsequent Canadian career is a brief examination of Anderson's alienation. What forces led this individual, who, at one time, showed so many of the same values and aspirations as Stefansson, to turn violently against him in the short space of one year? Perhaps, to some degree, such an examination will redress the balance and shed more light on the controversy itself.

In 1918 Anderson confided to Isaiah Bowman, editor

Ibid.
of the Geographical Review and secretary of the Explorer's Club of New York, that he had actually lost his respect for Stefansson during the 1908-12 venture:

[Stefansson] was an international Socialist then, not having really started his "bounder" career among the great and nearly-great, and had a very express contempt for anything so provincial as patriotism. Patriotism was an ignoble virtue, rather than a fault[,] comparable to a rooster fight[ing] for his dung hill. He himself was a cosmopolitan superman above country, a Pacifist, disclaiming that he owed anything to a country which brought him out of poverty, allowed him to sponge his education through state universities and three years of Harvard...; in case of war he would go to Canada or any other country which was neutral and pacifistic. I call[ed] that rot merely twaddle at the time, not recognizing that yellowness is congenital and will out in an emergency. 103

To Anderson, a veteran of the Spanish American War, and for a number of years after that part of the military establishment at Blee's Academy, such a philosophy was cowardly and traitorous and should be fought at every turn. The Karluk episode more than anything was proof of Stefansson's treachery for Anderson, who would not believe Stefansson had had any intention of returning to the Karluk: "[a] commander first to leave his

103 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, Anderson to Isaiah Bowman [editor of the Geographical Review and secretary of the Explorer's Club of New York], 6 November 1918. This letter was written when Stefansson was being considered for the presidency of the Explorer's Club of New York. The invective affords a good illustration of how far the relations between the two men had deteriorated by that time. Although it is invective, however, it sheds some light on Stefansson's political views, and how Anderson may have tried to capitalize on the growing "Red Scare" in North America by linking Stefansson to the general movement. For further comment see p. 422.
ship and crew...has forfeited the respect of every man who has been in the Arctic and every man who has any instinct of the duty of a seafaring man, and...of an explorer."Anderson became convinced that nothing Stefansson had or would do could surprise him:

A man who has no principles or ethics (or rather a chameleon standard) in some things cannot be depended on in anything. Stefansson always maintained that morals were very relative, the average standards of the people you were with, New York morals were not Iowa or North Dakota morals and N.Y. morals not Arctic morals.105

He was sorry that he had returned North with Stefansson.

Even while in Ottawa during the spring of 1913, preparing for the Expedition, Anderson had had second thoughts and regretted being involved in Arctic work, "since it has passed out of the province of the American Museum", for, under Canadian auspices, he was certain that the prospects for furthering his own zoological work would not be bright "with so many conflicting interests to reconcile, and so many amateurs to personally conduct."106 Apparently the American Museum had promised to hire Anderson after the 1908-12 Arctic trip on a full-time basis, but could not afford to keep him beyond 1913. By working for the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa, though, Anderson could find the requisite security to pursue his studies; but once again, this position was obtained by Stefansson's negotiating,

104 Ibid.

105 PAC, RMA/14, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, [?] May 1915.

106 AMNH, Anderson to Lucas, 11 April 1913, file 719.
and it meant Anderson had to accompany the new Canadian Expedition as part of the price. Then during the spring of 1913 he had the thankless task of looking after all the details of planning and organization while Stefansson was either in the United States or Europe.

By the time he reached the west coast of Canada, Anderson knew full well the disposition of other members of the Expedition, particularly those of the Geological Survey. At that time he was not, strictly speaking, the spokesman for any "anti-Stefansson" faction—if it can be called that. He was just as upset as were his colleagues with Stefansson's vague statements and manner during the Nome meetings. Moreover, he was taken aback by the additional instructions from Ottawa, which no one had seen before, which gave Stefansson the exclusive right to issue news to the media, and forbade other members to write articles for at least a year after the Expedition's return South. This, the men correctly felt, was an unjust monopoly, and the last minute final instructions were blatantly unfair. Even R.W. Brock had fought against these privileges, asking Desbarats that "if anything is specified regarding the prohibition of magazine articles for one year by officers of the expedition, it should be so worded as not to exclude a scientific article in a scientific magazine but only popular articles, etc., for gain, as it may happen that some scientific facts should be published in a scientific journal."107

107 PAC, RG42, 84-2-21/vol. 1, Brock to Desbarats, 28 May 1913.
The Naval Service did not heed this suggestion from the Geological Survey, but issued instructions solely to favour Stefansson's private interests. Young and ambitious men, whose salaries were nominal, had been attracted to the Expedition by the prospect that their individual work would further their careers. Now this opportunity was, they felt, being taken away and there was nothing that could be done because the prohibition was official. Stefansson even went beyond the official orders, suggesting that all literature, diaries and writings were to be handed over to the government so that every written word could be examined by an ethnologist, presumably himself, for material on the Eskimo.

"In other words", argued Anderson, "scientific specialists in other lines were not competent to judge as to what they were willing to put on record officially to publish." The members were unanimous in their disapproval of Stefansson's idea; they agreed they would give him scientific information if he asked for it, but would not allow any individual to take all their literary work, or probe their private feelings and opinions. "The feeling spread, particularly on account of the impression that the camouflage was being taken off the

---

108 PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...."
109 PAC, RMA/35, Anderson Diary, 8 June 1913.
110 PAC, RMA/20, Anderson, "Preliminary History...."
111 Ibid.
the formerly supposed great scientific expedition, revealing it as at bottom a newspaper and magazine exploiting scheme" cleverly engineered by Stefansson. 112

The only concession Stefansson made was to his one-time partner. By an agreement concluded on June 12, 1913, between Stefansson and Anderson, Anderson was given authority to send news from the Southern Party, using "all reasonable care...to fulfill Stefansson's agreement with the London Chronicle for first reports for newspaper publication" of all the news of the Expedition. Further, Anderson was given the right, by the authority invested in Stefansson, to write or publish popular accounts of the "work and experiences" of the Southern Party after the Expedition's return. Anderson agreed to furnish a narrative account of the Southern Party for publication, to submit all magazine articles dealing with the work of the Southern Section to the London Chronicle for use "in conjunction with Mr. V. Stefansson's articles on the whole expedition." General articles dealing with Arctic life, "embodying experiences of the past" and not related in any way to the present Expedition could be published by Anderson at any time. However, all newspaper rights to the story of the Expedition belonged to Stefansson; Anderson not being permitted to engage in newspaper correspondence unless authorized by Stefansson. 113

Whether Anderson demanded this agreement is not clear,

112 Ibid.

113 PAC, RMA/20, Agreement entered into between V. Stefansson...and R.M. Anderson....[12 June 1913].
nor are Stefansson's motives for conceding it. It may have been that Stefansson was trying to regain Anderson's support which was essential to the smooth running of the currently factionalized Expedition. Shortly thereafter, Stefansson, wishing above all to have a smooth Expedition, went even further and offered Anderson a share of the newspaper profits if Anderson would issue all the Expedition orders under Anderson's name. Anderson, quite naturally was incensed by this and told Stefansson that he "wouldn't have anything to do with his game." He told the commander that he would have to issue his own orders on his own responsibility rather than force them through Anderson who, no doubt, would become merely a front.

Anderson was under a tremendous strain, challenging Stefansson, protecting what he considered the rights of the Southern Section, and at the same time coping with a number of serious personal problems. These personal affairs involved not only a crisis of conscience, but also the relationship between himself and his wife. For over two years he had fended off his wife's proddings to publish popular articles and thereby make a name and a little money for himself.  

114 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, 16 July 1913.

115 PAC, RMA/3, Mrs. Anderson to Anderson, 8 January 1913; 29 March 1914; 14 November 1915. Mrs. Anderson even went so far on one occasion as to ask Stefansson to urge her husband on. SC, CAE/General-1914 file, Mrs. Anderson to VS, 5 April 1914.
There did seem quite a bit of truth to Stefansson's contention that he tried to help Anderson, but the latter did not seem inclined to publish when he had the chance.\footnote{PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915].} Anderson had come to the realization, after much soul-searching, that he did not have the talent, and moreover did not wish to subscribe to values which he no longer shared with Stefansson:

...whenever I think of "exploring" I get disgusted with it..., because I haven't any talent for making it pay. There are a good many things I like to do for the work's sake, but I get sort of panic stricken when I think of having to tell about it afterward. People expect me to talk, and you know I can't lecture "for sour apples", or write anything that interests very many people. As Bartlett says, a returned explorer is like a politician out of office. I think myself exploring new lands ought to be left to navy or army officers--they can do things, and are not expected to make a "spiel" about it afterwards.\footnote{PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915]; SC, CAE/General-1914 file, VS to George Phillips, 14 February 1914.}

Mrs. Anderson understood full well her husband's situation and that subject never recurred in subsequent correspondence. But her initial prodding and Stefansson's subsequent petitions, only strengthened Anderson's resolve that publishing and Stefansson's type of livelihood--as Anderson perceived it--was not the life for him. Moreover, he realized--and it must have

\footnote{PAC, RMA/14, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, 21 January 1916.}
been an agonizing realization for so quiet and brooding a man—
that he lacked Stefansson's special abilities. Whether this
should be construed as jealousy or as envy must remain a moot
point.

When Anderson had read My Life with the Eskimo, which
became available only after the Expedition was in the North,
Anderson commented that Stefansson had done some very good
writing in places but that it required editing; Stefansson's
sniping at the "poor old missionaries", he felt was "mostly
buncombe". More seriously, though, to Anderson My Life
was not only full of half truths and misrepresentations—which
he never spelled out in detail—but the first chapter of the
book convinced him he had been taken undue advantage of.

So Stefansson finally called his book ["]My Life in
the Arctic". [sic] That title suits me exactly—
there are so many phases of his life which were a
continual initiation to me. I don't know what he
put into it, as I never read more than the first
chapter of proof, which was largely an account of
his trip down the Mackenzie substantially as I had
it in my journal of field notes. He borrowed the
same to refresh his memory on a trip to Ottawa as
he said his notes were not connected at that period.  

Nevertheless, to readers the final result seemed to be Stefansson's
own and, to put it mildly, his borrowings without proper credit
do seem to have exceeded the bounds of good taste. In no way
would this have endeared him to Anderson. A comparison of the
initial chapter of My Life with the Eskimo with Anderson's field

118 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, n.d.[1914?].
119 PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, 28 June 1914.
journals for the period 15 April 1908-13 August 1908, does reveal that, for colour, Stefansson incorporated much material directly from Anderson's descriptions and narrative of the journey and that his account followed Anderson's diary very closely indeed.120

The following examples were chosen at random:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>My Life With the Eskimo</th>
<th>RMA Diary*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dogs and their habits on ship and swimming</td>
<td>p. 11-12</td>
<td>May 8, p. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top-stick</td>
<td>p. 12-13</td>
<td>11, pp. 26-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fires</td>
<td>p. 10</td>
<td>3, p. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green of trees and their change</td>
<td>p. 13</td>
<td>2, p. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural gas</td>
<td>p. 15</td>
<td>10, p. 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowering boats by rope at Lower Cascades</td>
<td>p. 15</td>
<td>16, p. 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tar sands and McConnell's report of 1892</td>
<td>p. 15</td>
<td>18, p. 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosquitos</td>
<td>p. 16</td>
<td>21, p. 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athabaska Lake and ice drifting cakes and slush ice. Variable flow</td>
<td>p. 16</td>
<td>22, p. 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Routledge investigating rumour of Indian killing buffalo</td>
<td>p. 19</td>
<td>June 1, p. 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittaker gets word that supplies not coming</td>
<td>p. 34</td>
<td>July 14, pp. 153-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whale-meat poisoning</td>
<td>p. 35</td>
<td>23, p. 165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PAC, RMA/35, RMA Diary, "Field Notes", 15 April 1908-13 August 1908,
Finally, Anderson blamed not only Stefansson for his plight but also his own foolhardiness in allowing himself to go on another Arctic Expedition when his wife appeared to be in a dangerous emotional state. And Mrs. Anderson, although she gave him moral courage, seldom let an opportunity pass to remain her husband of his neglect. Time and time again in sad, heart-rending letters she would write him of her loneliness, insecurity, agitation and fits of hysterical crying. In early November, Mrs. Anderson gave birth to a baby, but three days later it died. By a touch of fate it was Stefansson who carried the sad tidings to Collinson Point in early March and had the unpleasant duty of informing Anderson. The pressure of Stefansson's presence, anxiety over his possible requests, combined with the news of the tragedy, conspired to bring about the following unpleasant scene between Stefansson and Anderson:

...I hardly had a peaceful minute for a week, starting with an acrimonious discussion lasting until 3:00 a.m. with the chief trouble-maker. No chance to brood over private grief--VS struck a very unfavourable time to make any compromise with me, when I was thinking of my poor girl in Sioux City, from whom I had just received the sad news. I think I must have given a good imitation of a bear that has lost a cub--hard and bitter towards the Arctic and everything in it--just the proper mood for fighting without losing my head or temper. Poor dear girl, you are the heroine in all conscience. I feel quite guilty when I think of your lonely condition. I had counted on the boy being some company for you. I

121 PAC, RMA/2, Mrs. Anderson to Anderson, 12 November 1913; RMA/13, Mrs. Anderson to Anderson, 18 January 1914; RMA/3, Mrs. Anderson to Anderson, 11 February 1914.
suppose your kind friends think that I have deserted you, since they talk us up and down. I suppose they think marriage kills romance.122

At that particular juncture then there could have been no compromise, and in the months and years to come Anderson preferred to leave Stefansson to his own devices and, though he was willing to ignore "the chief trouble-maker" for short periods, he never forgot.

*       *       *

By the spring of 1914 it was obvious that the Canadian Arctic Expedition was turning into a nightmare. The expansion of the Expedition, the shoddy, hasty preparations, and the fuzzy and contradictory nature of the official instructions, all conspired to bring more fundamental tensions to the breaking point. Differing points of view regarding the Expedition's purpose created two camps, pitting Stefansson, the commander, against virtually the entire Southern Section, whose position and priorities were faithfully guarded by R.M. Anderson.

The future of Stefansson's exploring career hinged on the successful outcome of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. The Karluk had been lost to Stefansson and he found it difficult to mount a second Northern Section when he tried to convince Anderson and the Geological Survey of the merits of an ice trip. True, the Southern Section had wished him well, but refused to have anything to do with what they considered a

122PAC, RMA/13, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson, 28 June 1914.
publicity stunt. No compromise was possible, especially with Anderson who had been placed in an unenviable position as second-in-command responsible for the success of the Southern Section; besides, Anderson appears to have been under a serious emotional crisis which led to a deterioration of his personal relationship with Stefansson. From Collinson Point onward, the two men were to be at daggers drawn.

A considerable share of the blame must rest on Stefansson's shoulders. His behind-the-scenes manoeuvres in Ottawa while the Expedition was waiting for him on the west coast cost him much respect. His constant efforts to impress his view upon the Expedition that success must be achieved at all costs convinced his opponents of their own moral superiority. Good management and tact were not always in Stefansson's repertoire of virtues.

Stefansson was no charlatan, however; rather, he was an individual who was intent on achieving success for the Expedition and for himself. Public acclaim was to be his vehicle for achieving greatness, and his method of securing government and private support for this and any other Expeditions. At this juncture Stefansson appeared to be more the promoter than the scientist; his concern over controlling the rights of publication had been frowned upon and openly criticized. Publicity-seeking may have obscured his finer points, the explorer impulse may have overridden his professional instincts. To Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History and no amateur when
it came to expeditions, the Canadian Arctic Expedition was a failure of character, having men, including Stefansson, who were not "100% in character, in personality, in training...."123

Stefansson was convinced that in order to remain in the public eye and keep support of the Canadian government his own plans must proceed without hindrance until their inevitable success. As the next chapter shows, between 1914 and 1918, the politics of the Canadian Arctic Expedition--in Ottawa and in the Arctic--were to revolve around Stefansson's drive to make good.

123 AMNH, Osborn to Lucas, 16 August 1922, file 1077-1C.
CHAPTER VII

THE POLITICS OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION

Between 1914 and 1918 Stefansson's parties travelled more than 20,000 miles by sled and dog team exploring, roughly, 100,000 square miles of Arctic territory. In the process he and his companions discovered the world's last major land masses—Brock and Borden Islands (1915), Meighen and Lougheed Islands (1916), between latitude 73° North and 80.2° North and between longitude 98° West and 115° West. His exploratory parties ran a line of soundings 100 miles northwest of Cape Isachsen, and redefined portions of the Arctic Islands' coastlines, and lifted the curtain on about 65,000 square miles of Beaufort Sea to the north of the Mackenzie basin, 10,000 square miles of the Arctic Ocean west of Prince Patrick Island, about 3,000 square miles along the northeast coast of Victoria Island, and over 15,000 square miles of land and sea to the northeast of Prince Patrick Island. His five and one-half years in the Arctic was a world's record for continuous Arctic service, and reflected a dogged determination. His drifting on ice-floes, combined with a fierce drive to survive the unknown,
and a faith that he would succeed, carried him and his parties hundreds of miles from the nearest land. These drifts enabled Stefansson to carry out hydrographic soundings which, for the first time, outlined the continental shelf from Alaska to Prince Patrick Island, and revealed the submarine mountains and valleys beneath the Beaufort Sea.

These achievements in exploration, fascinating and spectacular in their own right,1 were played out against a background of political manoeuvrings of several kinds—each important in understanding the Canadian career of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. The Canadian Arctic Expedition had run into trouble early in the game and Stefansson was determined to snatch victory from opponents who, he believed, were bent on his personal downfall.

The remainder of the Expedition, then, was to witness numerous attempts by Stefansson to maintain favour with Ottawa, and to win the support of the public at large. The politics of survival involved, in essence, Stefansson’s attempts to win petty political squabbles with the other members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, particularly Anderson who seems especially unco-operative. Only a few of these episodes need be highlighted here to illustrate the inner politics of the Expedition: Survival also meant—for want of a better phrase—Stefansson’s indulging in the politics of publicity. Finally,

1See Stefansson’s, The Friendly Arctic, for the details of his explorations.
survival involved a concerted effort to urge the Naval Service, already sensitive to the Expedition's problems, to carry on the fight on Stefanson's behalf in Ottawa. At times all of Stefanson's attempts were inextricably bound together. If Stefanson could hold his own, or regain the initiative, his future in Canada could be promising and he would succeed in proving his fitness, in line with the philosophy of Herbert Spencer.

It was not long after the Expedition had been under-way that Ottawa received a taste of what it had helped to create. The authorities were quite aware of the initial differences of outlook between the sections of the venture, particularly between Stefanson and the Geological Survey, and they could not help but be painfully aware of the goings on in Esquimalt, Victoria and Nome. For instance, Stefanson was quite upset that reports of the Geological Survey parties did not, and would not, pass across his desk; he demanded, instead, that all reports should be sent to Ottawa through the commander of the Expedition.\(^2\) The Naval Service was understandably hesitant in complying with Stefanson's wishes for, although that department was overall in charge of the operation, it would have been impolitic and perhaps impossible, to coerce

\(^2\) PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, VS to Desbarats [telegram], 11 July 1913.
the Geological Survey on this point. Stefansson was advised that the members of the Geological Survey were to continue to send these technical reports to their departments but "wherever possible submitting the substance of the report to you for information."\(^3\)

Moreover, to present the most favourable image to Ottawa, Stefansson, when he had to report on his difficulties with the Expedition, would focus on such peripheral issues as Anderson's failure to carry out his responsibilities. Again after the Collinson Point episode of March, 1914, Stefansson did not report his confrontation with Anderson immediately; instead, he brought a different side issue to the attention of Ottawa: the alleged haphazard, sloppy and wasteful activities of members of the Southern Section which Anderson should not have permitted:

I learned first from outsiders and it was later confirmed by members of the expedition that the establishment at Collinson Point was run on a sort of system of volunteers with the result that some men did more work than others of the same rank and that on occasion certain important things were neglected or done in a slip-shod way. While "settle it among yourselves" is an attitude on the part of a commander which is likely to keep him out of trouble that arises it tends to create friction among the men and is not likely a policy that leads to the greatest efficiency, I take it that the business of a commander is, among other things, to shoulder responsibilities, one of which is an equitable division of labour among the men according to some system. This is necessary if anything much is to be done beyond spending the winter peaceably in the house.

\(^3\) PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 1, Desbarats to VS [telegram] 14 July 1913.
Another point is that while both natives on their own account and others working for the ships have secured considerable game...we, as favourably situated as any of them, have secured none. There were numerous men during a considerable portion of the fall and winter doing no work at Collinson Point....Our food resources are limited; men sent out to hunt would have been physically better off for it and dog feed and man food would have been saved....I don't think that scientific men should neglect their work to hunt, but at times when there is no scientific work being done and when no active preparations are being made for any it would be more enjoyable for them and in every way conducive to the interests of the expedition to let them occupy some of their spare time hunting[...]

Stefansson concluded his remarks by advising Anderson not to mollycoddle the members of the scientific staff, or to wait on them, but leave non-scientific and administrative matters to others and to pursue his own zoological work. Stefansson, who had never been close to the detailed planning, equipping, organization, did not seem to realize the scope and intensive nature of Anderson's responsibilities, that Anderson had more on his mind than keeping the men "busy". Stefansson was probably correct in advising his second-in-command 'to run a tighter ship', but, in view of the very diverse objectives of the Southern Section, Anderson felt that he had to forsake much of his own scientific work for the smooth running of his

---

4SC, CAE/General-1914 file, VS to Anderson, 10 March 1914. A copy of this indictment, as was Stefansson's usual procedure, was sent to Ottawa. However, Stefansson's version of the serious confrontation of March 1914, was not written until January 1915, by which time much water had passed under the bridge.

5Ibid.
his section: "...every dog, every man hired, and every charge in our outfit [has] so much more responsibility, to RMA that with two years ahead of us we must know where we stand."^6

Anderson's reaction must have been one of exasperation for, far from resolving whether Stefansson could encroach, or was encroaching, on the resources of the Southern Section, Stefansson's memorandum had managed to ignore their real grievances. Instead, Stefansson intimated to Anderson and to Ottawa that the Southern Section was not being run efficiently, while knowingly or not, he was obscuring the central issues to his own advantage. Chipman was certain that this tactic was deliberate: "He has the prestige which makes anything he says carry weight, and he has an easy assurance in the telling which is not always convincing but very readily conveys an impression that varies with the facts and...puts persons or things in an unfavourable light."^7

In addition to this type of petty squabbling there was borne in on Ottawa a growing realization that the Expedition would be digging deeper and deeper into the government's pocketbook, far beyond the original $75,000 estimate for the entire venture. No one but a fool could have believed that the Expedition could have been operated on such a sum, and

^6 CP, Chipman Diary, 8 March 1914.

^7 CP, Chipman Diary, 11 March 1914.
most officials conceded that unforeseen developments had to be provided for. However, the spending over the next five years far exceeded all expectations. The throughout the first summer Stefansson reported that the Expedition needed more money. These requests, despite what his detractors may have said at a later date, were essentially valid:

The assembling of stores at Esquimalt was begun on the basis of a requisition made out by Captain C.P. Pederson and approved [by] Dr. R.M. Anderson. This requisition was on the basis of Captain Pederson's whaling experience, and contains many items which we consider either too luxurious, or too bulky for an arctic expedition (certain can foods, for instance) as well as others which on general principles we considered unsuitable (large quantities of salt meats for example). As the plans for the expedition developed it became evident that we should have more men to take care of than Captain Pederson's original requisition contemplated and it seemed to me advisable that the quantities of supplies be greatly increased beyond the original recommendation which was done for all the reasons to be inferred from the preceding summary and also because the uncertainties of arctic exploration made it advisable that the only limit placed on the supplies... shall be imposed by the carrying capacity of the vessel or vessels to be used.

The Karluk, Stefansson's ship, ran the risk of being caught in the ice and would need "as much food and fuel as she

---

8See, PAC, RG42, 84-3-2 to 84-3-11, "Estimates" [of expenditures for Canadian Arctic Expedition], 1913-1925. The total given at the end of the expedition was $512,628.68--a considerable sum above the original $75,000 to say the least. Also, there was a "[k]nown liability" which had to be added, some $23,923.42. Finally, an additional $30,000 had to be allocated in 1922 and 1923 for the publication of the Expedition's reports.

9PAC, RG42, 84-2-20/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, 23 June 1913.
could carry.\textsuperscript{10} In the Southern Section only the ethnologists, because of the nature of their work, would not require extensive provisioning:

The other men have work of a more exacting and confining nature and for that reason abundant provisions must be made for them, as also for the reason that many of them are men who expect and in some cases demand more comforts than ordinarily fall to a Polar explorer. They do this largely on the basis of their experience with scientific work of the government done in more southerly latitudes and they fail to see why they should not on an Arctic expedition be as sumptuously outfitted within the limits of transportation possibilities as they would be working in British Columbia or Ontario.\textsuperscript{11}

It is surprising how early (June, 1913) Stefansson's views regarding the habits of the scientists had formed. Not only had past governmental practice bred such complacent attitudes, he implied, but the nature of the Expedition had been changed almost beyond recognition by the government--from a scientific staff of 6 men, 1 ship and $75,000, to one of 13 trained specialists, 2 or 3 ships, and still, roughly $75,000. It was inevitable, therefore, that the cost of the re-vamped project would exceed the original figure, but "the increased cost is more than counterbalanced by the increased development of the Expedition along other lines."\textsuperscript{12} Stefansson's logic was hard to fault and the Naval Service realized that the onus

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
was on itself to make certain the Expedition had the requisite funding. This feeling perhaps can account for the Naval Service's requests for additional appropriations throughout the entire venture without asking too many questions, and for its giving Stefansson essentially a free hand in spending.

In any case, Desbarats, basing his arguments on those of Stefansson, informed his superior, the Minister of the Naval Service, that immediate action had to be taken before the Expedition was beyond civilization. The Minister took quick action for the Canadian government, by a decision of 8 October 1913, agreed to provide another $135,000. Again it had proved easier to raise $10 to continue a venture already in the field than to secure $1 to begin a new work.

The most serious problem the Ottawa bureaucracy faced in 1914 was how to deal with Stefansson's plans for an ice foray into the Beaufort Sea using a re-vitalized Northern Section following the loss of the original Northern Party in the ill-fated Karluk. Both Brock and Desbarats were aware of the differences of opinion within the Expedition, and both moved quickly--even before the Collinson Point episode broke it

\[13\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-55, Desbarats to Minister of the Naval Service, 27 September 1913.}\]

\[14\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-55, Privy Council decision of 8 October 1913.}\]

\[15\text{See p. 190.}\]
seems--to provide certain guidelines aimed at preserving a modicum of harmony. They assumed that the situation, after the disappearance of the *Karluks*, was that Stefansson now was left with a practically intact Southern Party, two small vessels, a motor launch and smaller boats, and made their further plans on this basis. They concluded that if such were indeed the case, it would be unwise and undesirable for Stefansson to attempt to detach members of the Southern Party to organize a new Northern Party: "The division of forces would probably defeat the object of sending out [the] Southern party by weakening it and the results obtained by...[Stefansson's] explorations of Banks and Fitzpatrick Island would not compensate for the sacrifice." 16 It was strongly impressed on Stefansson that the Southern Party must be kept intact in order to carry out, as best it could, its own programme of research in the Coronation Gulf area. 17 Desbarats, for his part, confided to Stefansson that although the Northern Party's ice work would be valuable, "as a greater part of the expenditure for the expedition has been incurred on account of the Southern party it was essential that this party should show results for the money so spent." 18

---

16 *PAC*, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, Desbarats to VS, 30 April 1914.


18 *PAC*, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, Desbarats to VS, 5 May 1914.
The government's position then, if anything, gave support to Anderson's criticisms of Stefansson's actions. One thing that Desbarats did spell out, though, was that Stefansson was to be the final authority on the division of the ships between the two parties.\(^{19}\)Anderson was given full authority, which was commensurate with his position as second-in-command, to direct the ships and crews, when—and only when—Stefansson was not available.\(^{20}\)Yet, this specific area of authority would be directly and successfully challenged—perhaps even abused—on a number of occasions by Anderson's simply hiding behind Desbarat's priorities.

Stefansson may have resented this order that his own plans had to take a back seat to those of the Southern Section, but he nevertheless expressed agreement with Desbarats' instructions and comments. They were "most satisfactory," "just what I think they should be."\(^{21}\)

...they command nothing, because he realized that local conditions must decide, but they advise just the things which I have always had in mind which are comprised in pushing the work of the northern section but be sure the southern section is not handicapped by lack of resources. Both sections

\(^{19}\)Ibid.

\(^{20}\)SC, CAE/Desbarats-1914 file, Desbarats to Anderson, 16 November 1914.

\(^{21}\)PAC, Stefansson Diary, 11 September 1914.
being equally my expedition engaged in carrying out my plans it is scarcely likely that I would do anything else.\textsuperscript{22}

Stefansson always denied he had in any way tried to weaken or cripple the Southern Party, though the contemporary evidence does show that he tried to persuade various Southern members to accompany his programme.

Stefansson, while happy with Desbarats' position, was visibly upset, though, by Brock of the Geological Survey who had cautioned the explorer to avoid making the "fatal mistake" of weakening the Southern Party to enhance the Northern work; for aside from Stefansson, the Northern work had been terminated with the disappearance of the Karluk.\textsuperscript{23} In a personal reply Stefansson proceeded to upbraid Brock for his presumptions in casting what Stefansson felt were aspersions on his

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. Stefansson, again avoiding the larger issues, in a later letter to Desbarats wrote that the real trouble was a "moral one", for he was "unalterably...of the opinion that the men of the government service are as a class unsuited for expeditions such as this one..." They were physically lazy, spoiled "soft", greedy, selfish, and slightly dishonest with government property because they felt, according to Stefansson's reading, that the government owed them a living: "Perhaps the most striking thing of the whole situation is that the men are evidently in reality good men. Several of them are exactly the men whom I should like for friends in the south...but they seem to have no scruples in burdening a government expedition with trash that costs money at home and hampers us in the field." PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, 13 February 1915.

\textsuperscript{23} SC, CAE/General-1914 file, Brock to VS, 7 May 1914.
scientific ability and his common sense:

The advice itself would not have made me sore had it not been for the fact that it repeated the advice solemnly impressed on me by my juniors and subordinates on the expedition a few months before. Not that I did not agree with them—the fact that made me sore was that everybody should assume that I alone had no sane ideas in regard to the conduct of the expedition. It was like being told by a young woman you take to dinner just which is the fish fork. If later on you were to show that you knew the fish fork from the others she would never cease believing that it was she who first taught you. Don't you think I knew the fish fork from the others?....

I understood clearly in Ottawa that you considered yourself to be a scientific man and in some sense much fuller and more orthodox than you supposed me to be. May I use the Socratic method on you? Then, why did you suppose that? Was it because of your position as head of the scientific department? If that was the reason, do you really and truly believe that it was your scientific orthodoxy that chiefly gave you your government place? That question can with confidence be answered in the negative even with all the degrees of latitude and longitude between us. Then why did you fancy your training was superior? I haven't the time to recite academic history, but the number of years and the recognition won are likely to get flattering consideration from each of us in his own case. Have you found in measuring yourself against others in your field that you stood comparison well?—Then have you any reason to think that the same has not been the case with me?

In other words, what you knew of me and what I know of you is not enough to give either a title to lord it scientifically over the other. Wouldn't it make you a trifle sore if I were to assume on the basis of what this or that man or organization thinks of my work that I stand a head taller than you in certain broad mutual aspects? 24

24 SC, CAE/General-1915 file, VS to Brock, 10 February 1915. Brock had resigned from the government service in August 1914 to become a dean at the new University of British Columbia, and by 1915 he was organizing a university men's unit for the war overseas. His successor as Deputy Minister of Mines was R.G. McConnell, and as director of the Geological Survey the
Stefansson was obviously quite jealous of his status and prerogatives within the Expedition and was unwilling, in view of the serious situation in the field, to have his abilities challenged by Brock, Anderson or others. Stefansson was determined to have his ice trip in order to fulfill his concept of the Expedition's objectives. But contrary to what he wanted the public to believe after the fact the type of trip that actually took place was unplanned, an improvisation.

Initially his exploration and ice work north of the mainland had entailed using the heavily-provisioned Karluk as a floating and drifting base from which to make sledge forays into the unknown. When that became impossible, he revised his plans to explore over the ice with a well-provisioned sledge party. The lack of co-operation and hostility on the part of Anderson forced him to strike out from Martin Point. Moreover, if one looks at the number of times, during the first ice expedition (1914) and those of 1915-17, that he and his companions were short on rations—and the number of those who became ill in the course of the explorations—it becomes apparent that much of what was accomplished was not because of the working out of any preconceived notions of what resources lay waiting for his party, but to good luck.

rather overshadowed William McInnes. O.E. LeRoy also resigned from the Survey, enlisted in the Canadian Army and was killed in France in 1916.

Stefansson was in this operation a man alone; he set out to prove to the government, his critics and antagonists, and above all, to the public, that he could contend with hostile nature in dramatic fashion and survive. Here, perhaps, is an example of his resorting to the politics of publicity.

On the first ice expedition, which began on 22 March 1914, the party, although high in optimism, soon began running low on food. They were living essentially on the supplies they had carried from Collinson Point. On 7 April, the members of the logistical support party--Crawford, Johanssen and McConnell--turned back, leaving only Stefansson, Storkerson, and Ole Andreason. On 1 May, Stefansson began to worry about the shortage of dog food which reflected itself in the inability of the dog team to pull as much and as far as they had previously. To give the dogs strength, food ordinarily designated for human consumption, had to be used; the party then was left with twenty days rations, "and when that is done the Lord help us all if we don't get game."  

This certainly does not indicate Stefansson's certainty that food would be forthcoming; if anything, it indicated that Stefansson was going on faith, on the stubborn hope that something would turn up. Added to this was the uncomfortable

---

26 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 23 April 1914; 27 April 1914.

27 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 1 May 1914.
feeling that the lateness of the season and the softness of
the ice might turn the expedition into a "dangerous enterprise."^{28}

Then on 8 May 1914, their fortunes changed:

Saw two seals together abreast of our camp, but
they were beyond 400 yds. of unsafe young ice and
the light struck them badly. I fired one shot
but did not hit. They came up on the same spot
five times which we watched. This is promising
for us--the presence of seals--as well as interest-
ing in view of our former belief that seals kept
within a few fathoms depth from shore.^{29}

Stefansson was elated by the prospect that game might
be secured so far from land, and eventually he came to argue
that he had known it all along: "He had never really doubted
that seals would be obtainable practically everywhere, but
proof is a great aid to conviction."^{30} Moreover, within a
few weeks they killed three bears and a number of seals, more
meat and blubber than was essential for their immediate needs.
But proof or not, they did have to think of the future, and
were not prepared to trust that other areas to be so bountiful:

---
^{28}PAC, Stefansson Diary, 11 May 1914. Stefansson al-
ways maintained that the falling out at Collinson Point had
taken up too much time, robbing him of the benefit of an
early and, hence, safe travelling season. Stefansson blamed
Anderson for placing roadblocks in the way of the ice party,
reducing the possibility of its doing more work. The only
actual help he received from members of the Southern Party
was from J.J. O'Neill, the geologist, who gave Stefansson his
pocket chronometer "for Stefansson was short of reliable
chronometers." LeBourdais, pp. 83. However, another reason
for the delay appears to have been that Stefansson was suffer-
ing from a severe case of hemorrhoids at the time. As he
confessed in his diary, he fabricated excuses for the good
of the enterprise, to cover up for what he considered a
humiliating malady. PAC, Stefansson Diary, 3 November 1916.

^{29}PAC, Stefansson Diary, 8 May 1914. Italics added.

^{30}LeBourdais, p. 94.
We now [31 May 1914] had on hand over 1400 lbs. of bear meat and 2 seals. This may seem a wanton waste of game and bad but Our Plans depend so on providence that I look upon this much as insurance against want should we need to spend the summer on the sea ice.31

Later, when relating his exploits to the public, Stefansson betrayed a cocksure attitude that everyone else had been wrong and that he by logical arguments convinced his men that game would be sufficient:

...I admitted freely at the start that my plan of travelling away from land an indefinite distance over moving sea ice, relying for food and fuel on animals to be secured by hunting was considered unsound by every popular explorer and every critical authority on polar exploration....

In rebuttal I appealed to the science of oceanography which...is as well established as most of the biological sciences. Thousands of observations taken by careful men had established this principle clearly laid down for instance, by Sir John Murray in "The Ocean" and in his larger work "The Depths of the Ocean", that the amount of animal life per cubic unit of Ocean water is least in the tropics and increases gradually as you proceed toward either pole. This is really a fact of common observation, although the ordinary observer neglects to make the proper deduction.

...[T]hat animal life in the ocean is extraordinarily abundant on the edges of the ice-covered area...is well known. It is equally well known that there are great currents that sweep into the Arctic and under the ice....It is asserted that fish do not take kindly to the ice covering over the sea at high latitudes. The polar ocean is generally several miles in depth, and what difference should it make to a fish though there be numerous pieces of ice floating on top?....

But even if all the fishes were to turn tail and

31 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 31 May 1914.
swim south when they came to the edge of the ice, there would still remain the tremendous quantity of plankton or floating life which without volition of its own is carried north under the ice....

Why is it logical to assume that these will all have died and disappeared before a particular cubic unit of water in question gets into even the center of the inaccessible area? Even were it to die and disappear when the center of the inaccessible area is reached, it would have by then lasted long enough to serve all our purposes. We were going to start from that edge of the ice from which the drift is assumed by Nansen and others to be northwestward or northerly; we should assuredly have with us as fellow travellers all these docile animals that allow the currents to carry them where they please. It was thus I reasoned that the animals upon which seals live will be found everywhere under the ice of the polar sea. And if the feed is there, the seals will follow the feed. We can travel along with confidence, killing seals as we need them using the bear and part of the fat for food and the rest of the fat for fuel.32

Stefansson tempered his statement by acknowledging that on the ice, just as on land, there would be certain barren areas in relation to seal life.33 But this would not perturb anundaunted and experienced explorer for he could travel confidently if he adhered to the following doctrine: "Do not let worry over to-morrow's breakfast interfere with your appetite at dinner. The 'friendly Arctic' will provide."34

In all the subsequent ice work, however, food remained a chronic problem, characterized by few periods of feast and more of famine.35 It must be realized, of course, that

32Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pp. 126-134.
33Ibid., p. 184.
34Ibid., p. 205.
35For example, PAC, Stefansson Diary [entries for] 8, 11, 12, 18, 30 January 1915; 30 June 1915; 13 July 1915; 20 April 1917; 20 May 1917.
Stefansson was re-assuring himself and his audience, and writing with hindsight, a valuable tool for any publicist—or historian for that matter. This so-called "doctrine" certainly was not evident before or during his ice expedition.

When it came down to it, luck more than planning or reliance on a particular theory carried the day. Luck and Stefansson's dogged determination to carry on, not sure what lay ahead. The "paramount" nature of the ice work\textsuperscript{36} in his scheme of things, kept up his spirits. Stubbornly, grudgingly, the "Friendly Arctic" from time to time, did come to his rescue.

Nevertheless, Stefansson—really the last great explorer of the old school—thought his method was the perfection of Arctic exploration, and, in fact, that he had ably demonstrated it through the mere fact of his party's and his own survival. Travelling with an almost empty sled and living off the country was "no work for a pessimist", though he considered his method easier than the traditional pemmican method "where the eating of dogs and [the explorer's] starvation follow the emptying of the last meat tin."\textsuperscript{37} Perhaps it was, but technological change was passing his method by.

For the most part Stefansson was fortunate in having

\textsuperscript{36}PAC, Stefansson Diary, 18 January 1915.

\textsuperscript{37}PAC, Stefansson Diary, 29 June 1914.
men who were what he considered optimists, men who, although new to the fare, became accustomed to it. But Stefansson always tried to convince himself and the public that harmony in the Northern Section was the order of the day.\textsuperscript{38} Again the politics of publicity.

Nevertheless, throughout the entire span of the Expedition there were to be a host of difficulties within Stefansson's own Northern Party. Most of these differences with his own companions were related to the tensions of living together at close quarters in the environment and to the idiosyncracies of the commander. Despite Stefansson's assurances that his method of exploration would see his men safely through the Expedition there were a number of occasions when his men were either dissatisfied or balked at continuing their efforts. This reluctance was particularly true of the 1917 trip, the last for Stefansson, just when his "method" had--in a limited way--proved its viability in the trips of 1914-16.\textsuperscript{39}

There were several reasons for the discontent. Some

\textsuperscript{38}Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 163-213. Also, SC, Stefansson Diary, 26 November 1914; 27 January 1915.

\textsuperscript{39}PAC, Stefansson Diary, 21 May 1913, Harold Noice who contracted scurvy was probably the sickest of all but the most enthusiastic for carrying on of all Stefansson's companions; and this disposition of course, impressed Stefansson. Nevertheless, the presence of the scurvy on the 1917 trip certainly does not speak well for his method.
men were dissatisfied with the nature of the work, because little concrete work was being achieved, and most of the time was spent waiting for and slaughtering animals to secure enough food.\textsuperscript{40} If anything, this was one of the main charges levelled at Stefansson's methods; time and effort spent on actual provisioning meant that little headway—other than pure exploration—was made in taking scientific observations. Stefansson's method was fine for anthropological pursuits when one moved with the natives—which was not the case with these explorations. But to apply this procedure to all forms of Arctic investigation was highly unrealistic.\textsuperscript{41} The only satisfaction the 1917 trip had brought Stefansson was the conviction that at least one man, Storker T. Storkerson, was "the best man I ever had." "His only fault is his proneness to fail to keep contracts, and to 'change his mind'. So

\textsuperscript{40} See PAC, MG30/C29, Diary of E.L. Knight, 11 November 1916 to 27 July 1917.

\textsuperscript{41} There may have been much truth to Anderson's observation: "Their method of rushing blindly from one seal to the next seal they can kill does not allow the stops that must be made to get suitable weather observations, and anything such parties can add to the maps (if [Stefansson] can persuade Geographic Societies with sufficient eloquence to hoodwink them) will be as misleading as the old charts... I can give VS credit of marked ability when he sticks to his trade, but when he decided he could be a geographer and oceanographer with absolutely no training except as a dog-musher and pedestrian with literary leanings, he got beyond his depths." PAC, RMA/4, Anderson to Mrs. Anderson [?], 17 January 1916.
long as you keep him in humor he is energetic, resourceful and fruitful [sic] enough, and at any rate is no coward. 42

Storkerson was the one person who was essential to Stefansson, for the single reason that it was Storkerson who had the requisite experience, having served on the Leffingwell-Mikkelsen Anglo-American Polar Expedition. In many ways, in fact, Stefansson was utilizing Storkerson's exploration techniques. It appears that Storkerson more than Stefansson, was responsible for many of the critical decisions while they were on the ice, for Stefansson would not move until he had sought Storkerson's advice. 43 From 1914 Stefansson handled Storkerson with kid gloves, usually giving into his whims and moods, because of his special talents. These concessions reached the farcical, but Stefansson felt them necessary to secure harmony with his trusted and essential fellow traveller. 44 Stefansson may have trusted his lieutenant, but Storkerson certainly had his reservations about his commander. He was certain that since he had set out with him from Martin Point, he had been given little support by his commander who "has an idea that no one except himself knows how to handle

---

42 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 21 May 1917. Stefansson naturally considered the 1917 venture a failure "with no more to the credit of the expedition than is already on the balance sheet." Ibid.

43 See PAC, MG30/C25, Storkerson Diary, 8 March 1915; 15 April 1915.

44 For example: On May 20, 1915, when "At Sea", "Agreed with Storker Storkerson this day that if Storker Storkerson's "back is sore" when we reach Prince Patrick Island, or if he thinks his wife needs him in Banks Island, V. Stefansson is to try to land Storker Storkerson in Banks Island and get him to Cape Kellett by June 15 if possible." "Agreement between Storker T. Storkerson and Vilhjalmur
an [sic] stove."45 Neither was he keen to live on a straight meat diet as Stefansson insisted. Storkerson agreed that they could subsist on such a regimen, but he contended the party would be incapable of doing any hard work, as were Eskimos before the introduction of beans, flour and potatoes.46 On top of this Storkerson criticized his commander for not exerting enough authority:

"[T]here has been no attempt to discipline the men doing almost what they like and if he wants anything to be done he has to beg or coax them to do it in some cases they have been telling him what to do it is his own fault he has been treating them like equals consequently they think they are just as good as he is, and that he cannot get along without them...."47

Storkerson should have been the last person to talk.

Stefansson, never the best judge of character, would eventually find out his lieutenant's sentiments,48 but he always

---

45 PAC, Storkerson Diary, 4 May 1915.

46 CP, Chipman Diary, 8 August 1915. Apparently even Stefansson agreed with this assessment for he confided to Crawford, that he too experienced the same debility. Ibid. Perhaps Chipman should be given credit for his effort, on this matter, at least, to relate tales as accurately as possible. Stefansson did confide to his diary that eating cereals made him "feel more active and energetic." SC, Stefansson Diary, 29 June 1914.

47 PAC, Storkerson Diary, 23 July 1915.

48 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 13 September 1916; 30 June 1917.
had the ability to forgive, and the two eventually became close associates. In the Arctic, with so much free time and very little to talk about, personal frictions and gossip-mongering were bound to flourish. Back-biting and back-stabbing were rampant; all were involved and no one could escape indulging, even a little, in so trite a pastime. "Tales Out of School", Stefansson observed, were being circulated and embellished about one another, and particularly about the commander:

It seems strange so many should be anxious to cooperate in scuttling the ship when they have to gain by it only the harm they work the commander. But seeing the like is known from most exploring expeditions from Columbus and Hudson on, it is, perhaps more than anything [,] to be looked upon as a further proof that human nature has not altered materially. Tennyson is in a small minority when he says that men may rise on stepping stones of other dead selves to higher things; it is far more commonly accepted that the way to rise is on stepping stones of dead or discredited fellows.49

Although all sorts of stories were circulating, some true and some not, Stefansson like other men, grew somewhat paranoid about their effects, certain they were deliberately designed to undermine not only the actual work, but his prestige as well. That was the way he felt concerning the Collinson Point incident in 1914, and continued to be so inclined throughout the remainder of the Expedition. The continuing "struggle" for the North Star is a case in point which aptly illustrates the

49 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 13 September 1916.
internal politics of the Canadian Arctic Expedition.

* * *

On the 1914 Expedition, shortly after Stefansson had left Martin Point, he had ordered the North Star to meet his party at Banks Island, requesting that Wilkins should take charge of the Star and proceed as early as possible to the west coast of Banks Island. This would provide insurance for the ice party and cover the possibility of the Karluk's crew coming there. Similarly, the other vessel, the Mary Sachs was first to carry ten tons of supplies to a point in Dolphin and Union Straits for the use of the Southern Party, then proceed west and north to winter in Banks Island.

Anderson rather unscrupulously exceeded his authority, and refused to abide by Stefansson's written orders, arguing that if the Sachs had to place a cache she would never have the time to reach Banks Island, particularly

...as there would be no one who has much knowledge of navigation or who is directly enough responsible to the Canadian Government to be depended on to take proper care of Government property or to make sufficient energetic efforts to get the vessel to some point where she could communicate with Mr. Stefansson and to make the resources of the vessel of use to the expedition.

50 SC, CAE/Despatches and Orders-1914, VS to Anderson, 6 April 1914.

51 Ibid.
and to the Government during the winter. If that were the case, Anderson speculated, then the Sachs, "with her good equipment for winter exploratory work" would finish by being of no use to either Section, and the Southern Party would be penalized by having to send badly needed men to look after supplies which might be deposited "at some unknown or unsuitable place." Anderson decided, therefore, to transfer Wilkins from the North Star to the Sachs, feeling he was more reliable and could take charge of a larger vessel that could carry more equipment and more supplies, thus providing more resources for Stefansson's party. At the same time, to ensure this action did not handicap the activities of his Southern Party to any great degree, the North Star would stay with Anderson.

Wilkins did not like the idea, but finally gave in to Anderson's pressure, something that infuriated Stefansson who considered himself, rightly, the commanding officer: "he [Wilkins] should have obeyed [my orders] irrespective of countermanding orders from any officer of inferior rank." But Wilkins had little choice. There was not much he could do but obey Anderson, who was second-in-command and the

---

52 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, Anderson to Wilkins, 10 August 1914.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

authority on the spot. To Stefansson, Wilkins' backing down was a tragic mistake, for in the commander's estimation, the Mary Sachs was not properly or adequately equipped, as Anderson had assured. Anderson's questioning the validity of Stefansson's project and creating difficulties was unnecessary "imagination".

On the basis of this characteristic I formed on my second expedition (his first) the opinion that in spite of many excellent qualities he was unsuited to command an Arctic expedition--an explorer must not be a pessimist, he must believe that things can be done. As Caesar said of his soldiers: "they conquered because they thought they could." But he gave me many proofs in four years of his ability to carry to success instructions which he thought would fail.

On this basis, Stefansson claimed, he had selected Anderson for his present position, but he now had serious reservations about his choice. Stefansson disliked especially the transfer of Wilkins from the North Star, and he had grounds to be suspicious. Wilkins, Anderson claimed, was trustworthy enough to look after government property because the Mary Sachs' present crew were not directly responsible to the government. Yet the present commander, Captain Bernard, was a salaried employee of the Canadian government, while Wilkins worked independently for the Gaumont Company—a moving picture

---

56 PAC, RG42, 84-2-20/vol. 2, WS to Desbarats, n.d.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.
outfit—and "never received a salary from the government and whose connection with the government is the most indirect of any member of the expedition whatsoever." 59

Moreover, did Anderson have such authority to act? He knew by August 1914 that Ottawa did not want the Southern Section broken up, and this he argued justified his earlier stand at Collinson Point; he was also given authority to allocate the ships in his commander's absence. But the sailing orders of the North Star were a direct order from Stefansson who had full authority, confirmed in Desbarats latest statement, to do with the vessels as he saw fit. One must conclude that Anderson's actions even by the most loose interpretation, were insubordinate. And Anderson's defence, that he was acting in the best interests of the Expedition in overruling Stefansson, was bound to come under attack if, in fact his change did not work out for the best—as it did not. The Mary Sachs, suffering from mechanical and caulking problems 60 had to be beached at Cape Kellett. Stefansson did not press the issue then, but was convinced that much more would have been accomplished if he had had the right ship to do the job. 61

59 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Desbarats, 16 September 1914.

60 PAC, RG42, 84-2-3/vol. 3, Wilkins to Desbarats, 19 August 1914.

61 Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pp. 271-73.
The following year Stefansson took no chances about acquiring the North Star for his 1915 exploration programme. Stefansson planned a trip over the ice north and west from Prince Patrick Island into the unknown. Because of delays, however, it became necessary to being the trip from Cape Alfred so again it was necessary to trust others. The North Star was requested; Wilkins was to bring her as far north as possible that summer for support. To make certain his orders were followed, Stefansson armed Wilkins with enough authority to prevent his being cowed by Anderson:

To whom it may concern; I have authorized G.H. Wilkins, second-in-command of the northern section of the Canadian Arctic Expedition to act for me in all [things] and so have the same powers, rights, and privileges I have myself both as a private individual and as commander of the Canadian Arctic Expedition to trans-act any business which in his judgement is necessary or expedient on behalf of the Canadian Arctic Ex-pedition at any time or place when I am absent. This authorization is meant as a power of attorney in general, but part[icular] and especially to give him all the needed authority to bring to me in Banks Island or Prince Patrick Island the schooner North Star..., to engage men for the service of the expedition.... To purchase and pay for supplies, and if[necessary], to charter a ship to land supplies in Banks Island for the expedition.62

When Wilkins turned up at Anderson's camp, on the coast of Coronation Gulf, in late May of 1915, Anderson was furious with Stefansson's direct and explicit orders for the North Star, dogs and men, but would give no quarter. "Wilkins

62 SC, American Museum of Natural History/Blond Eskimo file, VS to "To Whom it may concern", 6 April 1915.
an even-tempered individual put the case for Stefansson as well as anyone could possibly have put it but Anderson's mind was made up. Anderson condemned Stefansson's orders as being "unreasonable". With the Alaska wintering at Baillie Island, the North Star remained the only vessel his party had for summer work; any other use of the North Star, he contended, would cripple the Southern Party's work. Stefansson he claimed, had no authority over Wilkins and nothing in the original orders enabled Stefansson to exercise or share such power.

Stefansson had wanted to secure the North Star himself, for as he had confided to his diary, it was "with regret and intense physical pain that I now give the command of the ice work to Storkerson and go to fetch the North Star ...." PAC, Stefansson Diary, 1 April 1915. All the members of his party were agreed that if anyone else went the orders would be ignored by Anderson. Ibid. He eventually felt Wilkins, who returned on 6 April was competent and trustworthy enough to carry out his orders. Stefansson found it impossible to leave, for members of his party would not serve if Crawford were allowed to stay. PAC, Stefansson Diary, 11 April 1915. The commander appeared to be the only moderating influence to keep in check the drunkenness that was now prevalent in his party--particularly Crawford's affection for mash and "denatured alcohol" which made him a "maniac and murderer" dangerous unless controlled. Ibid. The situation was controlling Stefansson. With Wilkins on the scene Stefansson would not have to give up the ice work which he felt was his main duty. However, Wilkins' appearance in the Southern camp to Chipman, was only further evidence that Stefansson was afraid to come himself. CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915.

CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915.

PAC, RMA/3, Anderson to Stefansson, 1 June 1915.

Ibid.

SC, uncatalogued manilla envelope, Wilkins to VS, 6 January 1916. Also CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915.
He ventured to upbraid Stefansson on these grounds: "It appears from the tone of your communication and from the information brought me by the men of your party, that you have assumed an exaggerated, and in my opinion, erroneous, idea of the authorities, powers, and limitations of your position." 68

Anderson bolstered his stand by quoting from the Naval Service directive of April 30, 1914, which forbade the breakup of the Southern Party. 69

So far as you personally are concerned I suppose you have the privilege of outlawing yourself, and being as irresponsible as you please, but please take notice that all the members of the Southern Party as at present constituted are in government employ at present in what they have heretofore considered as being a government expedition, are trying to operate a government vessel, and consider themselves bound by loyalty as well as professional ethics to abide by government service. So far as I know at present, no one here is willing to take up privateering at the present time. 70

This was a weak argument, because the circumstances were somewhat different now, and it was entirely open to question whether or not the Southern Section would be weakened. Wilkins, Anderson argued, had no power of attorney because his "power" was limited to the authority that Stefansson himself possessed in that particular situation--none. 71

68 PAC, RMA/3, Anderson to VS, 1 June 1915.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
Unlike Anderson, Chipman, probably the strongest member next to Anderson in the Southern Section, considered that this request of Stefansson was entirely reasonable and legitimate.\textsuperscript{72} To Chipman, "orders is orders"\textsuperscript{73} and he appeared hesitant about opposing Stefansson at this juncture: "It seems to me...that since we were under the Naval Service and since the Government had said definitely that authority and final responsibility had to be in the hands of one man, we were bound to carry out the orders."\textsuperscript{74} Seemingly, Chipman had become more cautious since the events at Collinson Point, for he was not willing to back Anderson on this occasion as he had previously; his position now was that "the responsibility of the decision must fall on RMA so I have refrained from saying much."\textsuperscript{75} When Chipman inquired as to the legality of Anderson's position, Anderson told him that "every commissioned officer was under the same oath to obey the legal orders of his superior officer,"\textsuperscript{76} and Stefansson's orders were, in his opinion, illegal. Chipman felt that Anderson was justified

\textsuperscript{72}SC, Wilkins Diary, 1 June 1915.

\textsuperscript{73}CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{75}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.
in his position and that the government would uphold him, but in such a tenuous situation, he reminded Anderson, "the responsibility for decisions must rest with him." Anderson may have used the question of the legality of the request as a pretext to further his personal vendetta with Stefansson; in any case he seemed willing to chance it. But Anderson was influenced by other considerations. Chipman, as spokesman for the men of the Geological Survey, pointed out that if the North Star left he would head south, for without the vessel not enough would be accomplished to warrant their staying. 78 "...when RMA asked if I had done all the work I wanted to do I replied--if the Star went--Yes!" 79 Anderson was in an unenviable position. If he gave in to Stefansson, the work of his section was finished; if he refused the commander, the responsibility for an action that was of dubious legality would be Anderson's alone. It was a risky gamble and the stakes were high, for the case for denying Stefansson's order boiled down to a difference of opinion as to priorities, with no hard facts or evidence to substantiate Anderson's contentions. Stefansson was right in his observation that the root of the matter was that "we were seldom able to agree

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
on the line that divides the merely difficult from the impossible or impracticable." 80

Wilkins was about to carry out an alternative plan suggested by Anderson but rather than alienate Anderson further and break up the Southern Party, he agreed to haul a small engine to Darnley Bay, buy the Argo, a schooner similar to the North Star, fit her with the engine, and substitute her for the North Star. 81 Then if by the time he returned the North Star had sailed, he could use the Argo for the Northern work. Having this additional engine seemed to satisfy Anderson, 82 though the second-in-command still had to carry the heavy burden of disobeying the direct orders of his superior with little reason.

Anderson was saved from carrying through this rather expensive and dangerous plan by a compromise that Cox and Chipman engineered on 4 June 1915. It appears that neither man was altogether happy at the turn of events. Under the circumstances they were prepared to back down from their insistence that the North Star was vital to their work in order that it could be made available for Stefansson ending the impasse. The change of heart meant a delay, but under the circumstances Wilkins was agreeable. The Geological Survey men decided that they would

80 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 3, VS to Desbarats, 9 January 1916.

81 SC, uncatalogued manilla envelope, 6 January 1916.

82 Ibid.
use a skin boat fitted with an outboard motor to reach Tree River where they would work until the North Star had made a trip to Cape Barrow to pick up a power launch, fuel and food, and cached them close to the Coppermine. The power launch that the North Star would bring back would be sufficient for their exploratory work. 83 Thus Stefansson secured the use of the North Star for his own work through a series of compromises hammered out by Anderson and Wilkins, with the aid of Cox and Chipman. He had the North Star, although it did him little good in the long run 84 and he felt he had won his point over Anderson's rival plan.

Stefansson's "victory" however, left a bitter taste not only in Anderson's mouth, but in the mouths of other members of the Southern Section. They interpreted Stefansson's delegating authority to Wilkins to carry out the commander's instructions as cowardly and unjust. Once more the cry was that "the whole things was an advertising scheme pure and simple." 85 Chipman was confirmed in his opinion of Stefansson's scheming and lack of integrity: "It must keep him awake nights to think of ways of avoiding issues, being prepared for

83 CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915.

84 LeBourdais, p. 119.

85 CP, Chipman Diary, 31 May 1915. For Wilkin's assessment of his own role, see p. 264, ftn. 98.
whichever way the cat may jump and explaining things after they happen."86 This criticism of Chipman's may have been justified, for before long, true enough, Stefansson forwarded to Ottawa a long report on the events of early June, 1915, written by Wilkins.87 Wilkins had been hesitant to do so, no doubt thinking that it would only make matters worse, but finally he agreed to prepare the statement after Stefansson had given his word "not to use it unless action is taken by the southern party."88 Within three days, however, Stefansson sent a copy to Desbarats, along with his own comments and embellishments.89 As far as we can be determined, the Southern Party had done nothing to justify Stefansson's use of Wilkin's private letter, so Stefansson's conduct was questionable. Stefansson wanted the record--as he saw it--to pass before the Deputy Minister's eyes where it would point out Anderson's errors and could be used against him only as a "defensive" measure as he told Desbarats.90 Whatever that meant. Stefansson had laid the ground well for his own defense, he felt, should

86 Ibid.
87 SC, uncatalogued manilla envelope, Wilkins to VS, 6 January 1916.
88 SC, Wilkins Diary, 30 December 1915.
89 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 3, VS to Desbarats, 9 January 1916.
90 Ibid.
that become necessary.

Stefansson, in fact, needed to cover his position; for, lacking confidence in Wilkins' ability to bring the North Star at the pre-arranged time, he had acted somewhat hastily and bought an additional ship, the Polar Bear, when the North Star failed to appear on time. One must not lose sight of the fact that Wilkins had been slightly delayed by Anderson's stubbornness. In mid-August 1915, Stefansson chartered the Polar Bear at the exorbitant fee of $1,000 a day to take him to Herschel Island for more supplies and news. Once at Herschel Island there were the inevitable delays while the charter fees of the Polar Bear kept mounting at an alarming rate, until eventually Stefansson decided to buy the ship outright in order to save money. Louis Lane, an unscrupulous individual to say the least, was willing to sell: $20,000 for the Polar Bear, $10,000 for her cargo, plus $14,000 for chartering fees—a staggering $44,000 for the Canadian government and public to bear. Moreover, the North Star which would now be superfluous was to be transferred to Lane as additional pay-ment. Lane boasted how he "worked Stefansson for what he could and he was sorry afterwards that he did not ask for more.

---

91 LeBourdais, p. 117.
He would undoubtedly have got it."92 Now that Stefansson had his own ship for the Northern Expedition, he "decided to render his independence doubly secure by the purchase for $6,000 of the auxiliary schooner Gladiator,"93 which he promptly turned over to Lane as part of the bargain so that the old captain could get his furs out.94 Wilkins was quite alarmed at this turn of events, because there was a chance that a charge of misappropriation of government funds might be levied against him for spending huge sums without authorization for more ships "and engaging 21 people half of them more or less unfit for service, and finally left with a cargo of useless supplies so small as to leave us short in some things even for one year."95 He feared that since Stefansson had not done the best thing from the government of Canada's standpoint, he would somehow be drawn in the ensuing row by Stefansson "to justify the

92Sc, Wilkins Diary, 16 June 1916. This seems to have been the case, for ten years later when Mrs. Anderson was entertaining Louis Lane, who prided himself on being "crooked", Lane explained why he was a friend of Stefansson's: "Sure I am a friend of his. Why shouldn't I be. I got $52,000 out of him in 1915 up at Herschel Island, and so I like him $52,000 worth, but he is a liar just the same--a d--liar!" PAC, MG30/C49, Mrs. Anderson to Mrs. J.T. Crawford, 4 February 1925.

93LeBourdais, p. 118.

94Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, p. 394.

95Sc, Wilkins Diary, 12 February 1916.
Wilkins' first reaction to Stefansson's transactions was mixed:

...I had half a mind to tell him what I thought of his actions and congratulate him on his tenacious memory and precise deductions instead of following the ordinary custom [as I did] and congratulate him on his success. This may seem to be hypocrisy and not my idea of good behaviour but as the saying is 'When in Rome do as the Romans do' or in other words when forced to deal with the unscrupulous our minds must [know] their methods or be overcome.97

To Wilkins the money and effort of Stefansson were not commensurate with the results, for the discovery of islands did not carry much weight with him, but "[p]ublically of course it is a great thing and reflects some credit at least on myself for being in command of the party that prepared the outfit at his disposal."98

96 SC, Wilkins Diary, 24-26 April 1916.

97 SC, Wilkins Diary, 30 December 1915.

98 Ibid. By the summer of 1915 Wilkins appeared anxious to get out and head back to civilization. He could not bring himself to do it this for "[i]n V.S. phrase...I should play the game for all that it is worth [.] It is his [i.e. Stefansson's] only chance to make a name for himself." SC, Wilkins Diary, 16 August 1915. Wilkins, though, had no use for Stefansson beyond catching some glory for his own personal ambitions. SC, Wilkins Diary, 24-26 April 1916. In fact they did not get along together at this juncture even though Stefansson admired Wilkins. Wilkins was amused by Stefansson's methods in his quest for greatness, but resented being used "as a go between". Besides, Wilkins intimated that Stefansson had delusions of grandeur and likened himself to Napoleon, a great and sensitive man, and fancied a particular resemblance with the French leader in another way, the slowness of their pulses: "[Stefansson] claims that the slowness of Napoleon's pulse accounts for his exceptional coolness and clear headedness. One need not extemporize
Wilkins may have been worried about the repercussions but Stefansson was not, even though his horsetrading would cost the government an additional $85,000 for the fiscal 1915-1916. The Naval Service was able to secure the funds from Privy Council with no questions asked. No doubt they applied the same criteria as they did with the purchase of the Gladiator: "The technical officers of the Department of Naval Service report that the price appears reasonable and that circumstances evidently justified this purchase." The Privy Council approved Stefansson's purchase of the Polar Bear not only because the charges were "reasonable", but because Stefansson argued that the loss of the Karluk had made it 

---


"essential to the continuance of the work" that the vessel be purchased.\textsuperscript{101} Stefansson had convinced the Canadian government of his position. No doubt, with the Department's deep involvement in the Great War, there was no time to worry about such civilian trifles.

In fact, aside from the Naval Service and the Geological Survey, very little attention was now being paid to the Canadian Arctic Expedition, by the Canadian government. True, concern was expressed over the fate of the Karluk in the House of Commons on several occasions,\textsuperscript{102} but Stefansson, after all, was acquiring new territory for the Dominion. Canada was too busy, naturally enough, with the war effort at home and abroad, chasing down corruption in the Shell Committee and the like, or worrying about the growing internal crisis in French-English relations. The controversies over command of the Expedition and its spending never once came before Parliament. The Liberal Opposition had its chance but compared to such affairs the Canadian Arctic Expedition's finances were trivial.

The only open attack on Stefansson came late in

\textsuperscript{101}PAC, RG42, 84-2<39, Copy of the Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, 20 January 1916.

1916 in the newspapers after the Southern Section had returned south. The writer responsible for the article was not named, but he may have been part of the Southern Party for he was identified by the Ottawa Citizen as "a government official holding an important office and has spent years in the Northwest Territories. He was there this summer." The informant claimed that his information came from the members of the Southern Party, and from Inspector Phillips of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police who criticized Stefansson for his extravagance and misuse of public money. The Citizen's source contemptuously dismissed the explorer as selling out "body and soul to the American newspapers and magazines for whom he was written, or plans writing, accounts of his explorations. As for discoveries or any scientific research work, this is of secondary importance. The main proposition from Stefansson's point of view is that the expedition should be a money-making venture." 104

None of Ottawa's politicians took up the question, however. The politics of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, for


104 Ibid.
the most part remained behind the scenes. Such publicity as there was, however, strengthened the resolve of the Naval Service to stop pampering Stefansson and bring him home before the situation was totally beyond control. Their explorer, though, had other ideas.

* * *

Stefansson was determined to stay North as long as possible so as to prove his own worth and the validity of the Northern Section of the Expedition; to keep the region for his private preserve. In the summer of 1915 Stefansson—-from a newly discovered island—-wrote to Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, thanking him for his personal support, and urging him to allow exploration to continue "between the mainland and the pole until the last mystery is unveiled." 105

We shall do what we can next year, but when the three years assigned to us are up there will remain much to do, We have had misfortune but have accomplished a part of our work nevertheless. What you think of how we have met adverse conditions I do not know, and I do not write to plead any personal cause. But I feel strongly not only that Canada should explore the region to which she lays claims as far as the pole; it is true also that by doing so she makes good her claims. I shall remain ready to volunteer my services for this work, but if it shall seem that my record does not earn further support, then let another carry on the work, so [long as] he is Canadian in Canadian service. 106

105 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 2, VS to Borden, 21 June 1915.

106 Ibid.
Doubtless, the prospect of discovering new land for Canada was quite appealing, if not irresistible, to Borden.

Stefansson believed that once the "rough" work had been finished "the work of the specialists becomes more imperatively needed if the effort is to be justified by the results." He even thought that once his work was finished he should return to civilization by the Northwest Passage and the Atlantic Ocean, but the Naval Service frowned on this suggestion as too time-consuming and fruitless in terms of exploration:

It is not the intention of this Department to prolong the duration of the expedition beyond the next summer 1916. While it is desirable that the arctic regions should be thoroughly explored and that Canada should obtain full information as to the northern sections, the conditions at present existing are such that it is not advisable for the country to maintain parties on work of this kind. It is impossible to predict the conditions which will exist in a year from now but at the present time there is no doubt that it would be unwise to incur any unavoidable expenditures and that it would not be advisable to continue the expedition after next summer.

In the light of this government policy, of which Stefansson was advised by mid-1916, his subsequent explorations and expenditures were dubious to say the least. In early

---


108PAC, RG42, 84-2-24/vol. 2, Desbarats to VS, 17 November 1915.

109Ibid.
1916, Stefansson anticipated staying at least until the spring of 1917, but he was certain that his men could not stand the strain of prolonged exploration. Many things had been left undone and he felt duty-bound to finish what he had initiated, so he approached the National Geographic Society in Washington with this in view:

I hope the Canadian Government will continue the work and I hope they will give me a chance to continue it. But the news of the terrible war which came last summer makes one fear that, even after peace has come, men's minds may be even more than ordinarily disinclined to the promotion of enterprises whose value cannot be seen by the mentally nearsighted. I feel that a deal of hard work has given me a moral right to the general field in which we are employed now (though I by no means own it), and that nine years have qualified me for it through a rather varied experience. I have an idea that the etiquette is that one who has in mind an exploring project should announce that fact. This brings me at last to the purpose of this letter; it is to ask you to announce for me in the manner you consider appropriate that I intend, if we return safe from this expedition, to attempt organizing as soon as possible another expedition looking toward the further exploration of the general area between the Parry Islands and meridian 180 reckoned from Greenwich. I believe this work should be done by Canada, in so far as least as concerns that region to which they have laid formal claim, but should the government consider itself not in a position to carry on the work further than has already been done by the present expedition, I expect to submit to your Society and to other geographic societies for approval and support a plan for the exploration of the above-mentioned area.


111 National Geographic Society Archives, VS to Gilbert Grosvenor, 14 January 1916.
To Stefansson, return to civilization would be a return to relative inactivity, for all he could look forward to was a series of lectures: "...I would rather do more work than talk about what is already done--old age will do for that, if I live long, and if I don't live long it will be all one if I made money or didn't." 112 He was intent, then, on staying in the North as long as possible, then raising another Expedition as soon as he returned home. 113

At the moment, though, he was primarily concerned with remaining in the Arctic as long as he possibly could, despite the Naval Service's policy. He began planning in earnest for a further ice trip for the spring of 1918 while still in the employ of a government that was anxious for him to come home as soon as possible. But (echoing Anderson's stand on the ships), as the man on the spot, it was up to him to "make the final decision as to what was wise and what was foolhardy and expensive. If on the very eve of an ice trip we should receive instructions not to make the trip, we would by not making the trip save only a small percentage of the year's expenses and have nothing to show for the work done.

112 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 6 June 1916.

113 Ibid.

114 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 20 October 1917.
and the money spent during the whole year."\textsuperscript{115} It appears then that he would go ahead, as he had in 1910, and virtually disregard any unwelcome notices from his superiors.

J.M. Tupper, Royal Northwest Mounted Police Inspector, commanding the Mackenzie sub-district, informed Stefansson in the presence of Constable Brockie that he had heard "rumours" on November 11, 1916 that Ottawa wished to recall him before he made any trips to Wrangel Island, the reported locale to which the Karluk survivors had come when the ship was wrecked. Inspector La Nauze had been instructed to get such correspondence to Stefansson "no matter what the costs,"\textsuperscript{116} But Stefansson apparently brushed aside Tupper's remarks and,

\ldots  intimidated that he was not going out of his way to get the mail, and he was sent up here to explore and that until the Government gave definite instructions to stop he was going to explore; and went on to cite the case of some General who was besieging Vicksburg and who though he knew messages were on the way calling him off, delayed the messages and captured the place. Stefansson said he would not go as far as to cut the wires, or anything like that, but as long as he had no instructions sent him he was not going out of his way to get any.\textsuperscript{117}

Until the receipt of specific instructions, then, Stefansson, like Lord Nelson, would go his own way, to the consternation

\textsuperscript{115} PAC, Stefansson Diary, 20 October 1917.

\textsuperscript{116} PAC, RG42, 84-2-31/vol. 1, J.M. Tupper to Commissioner A. Bowen Perry (Regina), 30 November 1917.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
of Canadian officialdom.

What spurred him on, aside from obvious consuming ambition, were other "rumours"—news that his Arctic world might be invaded by others whom he felt had no right to be there. The Norwegian, Amundsen, and the naturalized American, Bartlett, under the auspices of their separate governments, had announced plans to explore the Arctic. Stefansson felt he must carry out an obvious duty for the benefit of Canada, even if Canada was unaware and perturbed none about prospective alien expeditions that might be injurious to her northern claims. "It is evidently up to us to do something this winter if our country is to be first in this field."118

Besides, Amundsen and Bartlett had their nerve in proposing to come into Stefansson's domain for

I assumed that the etiquette of the past would hold and no expedition would enter our part of the Arctic so long as I intended to continue the work—which I intended after a year at home. But now it seems that if we are to do anything either for ourselves or for the government we must do it this year. It is now or never.119

Such was Stefansson's rationalization for an expedition he had already planned to conduct immediately, without taking a year off to organize a new venture. Now he argued that he had been forced by circumstance to become the custodian of

118 PAC, Stefansson Diary, 18 December 1917.

Canadian interests—an act for which he felt sure he would receive the requisite backing in the near future. No real expense would be involved in continuing the programme, he asserted, and "the danger is certainly no greater than millions are taking now in the war, and the object is the same personal achievement and the glory of the cause or country you represent—in this case Canada and the British Empire. Possibly we may increase the square mileage of the Empire lands as much as the armies." 120

Much to the dislike of Desbarats and the Naval Service, Stefansson, without prior authorization, publicly announced that a new ice trip would be forthcoming. 121 In early March, 1918, the party left Crow Island, Alaska, for the eight hundred mile trip to Wrangel Island, north of Siberia. But fortune and ill health prevented Stefansson from going; Stefansson was confined to hospital at Herschel Island. The fact that he sent out the party nevertheless, under Storkerson's direction, incensed Desbarats, who made every effort to get word to Stefansson that the Naval Service would not be liable for unauthorized expenditure. 122 The ice trip had not been

120 Ibid.

121 SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, VS to the Toronto Globe [telegram], 21 January 1918.

122 PAC, 84-2-31/vol. 1, Desbarats to Comptroller [RNWP], 9 April 1918.
authorized and the Naval Service saw nothing in its instructions to Stefansson that justified landing another exploration far across the Arctic Ocean, away to the west of Canada's sector of the Arctic Ocean, on Wrangel Island: "This is a departure from the original scheme, contemplates a lengthening of your absence, and thereby the date on which your reports will be available."123

Desbarats gave Stefansson the benefit of the doubt by professing to believe that the explorer had not received his Department's instructions of 17 November 1915 indicating that the government wanted all aspects of the Expedition wound up by the summer of 1916. The Naval Service had agreed it was proper for Stefansson to continue with his work that season.124 But this new trip of 1918 was something else. Twice, on 14 April 1916 and 6 August 1917, Sir Douglas Hazen, the Minister of the Naval Service and Desbarats' superior, had assured the Commons that the Expedition would be wound up within a year.125 Stefansson's new enterprise would make utter fools of the government. He must come back.

Yet Stefansson managed to get his way by deliberately avoiding the issue though knowing full well—but not

123 PAC, 84-2-29/vol. 4, Desbarats to VS, 3 April 1918.

124 Ibid.

officially—the mood of the Canadian government.

Professing innocence of the Naval Services' real intentions, he presented them, as he was wont to do, with a fait accompli. All that the Canadian government could do to avoid embarrassment, was to regret that its instructions had not reached Stefansson, and that as a result an ice party had been sent out in the spring of 1918. All that could now be done was to wait patiently for Stefansson to return to Ottawa, write his reports, tie up the loose ends of the Expedition, and forget the episode, while remembering what it was like to do business with Stefansson. Stefansson's return south in the fall of 1918 following his recovery from his serious illness, was the beginning of a whole new round in Stefansson's relations with Ottawa and with Canada.

* * *

The Canadian Arctic Expedition was finished. It had been Canada's greatest Arctic effort to date, towering both scientifically and financially over all previous efforts. New lands had been discovered and claimed for the Dominion by Stefansson; he, and especially the Southern Section, had brought home invaluable data from Canada's little-known northern

126 SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, Desbarats to Stefansson, 29 June 1918.
127 See p. 158; also p. 232, ftn. 8.
latitudes.

For Stefansson, and his public image, the enterprise had to succeed—and succeed it had, in a grand manner. Although Stefansson was to incur the wrath of Anderson's Southern Section and the belated displeasure of the Naval Service, he had used a host of refined techniques to keep his work going and to keep in favour with Ottawa and before the public at large. Some of his methods were questionable, but to Stefansson the ends had justified the means. He had won his battles with the elements and with the wide range of political considerations related to the Expedition. The events apparently indicated that he was unbeatable, that he could write his own ticket. The gods—in this case the politicians, the Canadian bureaucracy, and the public—were with him.

Stefansson presented his case effectively though there were misrepresentations about actual events and about his own prowess in exploration and survival. Anderson involuntarily had helped enhance Stefansson's image by fighting his commander at every turn. Anderson, as much as Stefansson, had overreacted, but only Stefansson had the ability to turn defeat into seeming victory. Political manoeuvring within the Expedition and publicity had worked to Stefansson's advantage.

Stefansson had fully realized the value of publicity and felt that "if our case is suitably presented to the public,
conclusions will be that this has been a successful expedi-
tion...." He no doubt was aware of the politics involved in
having a bad press and how to avoid this danger. Stefansson
was assured a good press by the London Chronicle and its
associated newspapers with which he had a formal contract,
and he received a broad coverage in North America, mostly
favourable. The type of attention the August New York Times
paid him in their editorials pleased the explorer:

A VIKING GOES EXPLORING

... In character of an ancient type, he is an
explorer of the most modern, seeking to make
a careful scientific examination of the country
traversed rather than to go faster and further
than others. These probably he was content
with; these less sensational achievements large-
ly because there is none of the other variety
left unattained at either end of the earth, but
he makes no moan that there is now no pole for
anybody to find, and goes calmly on, half
frozen most of the time and half starved much
of the time, with never a thought of turning
back till his appointed work is done. 129

Stefansson did not regard the Expedition solely as
a money-making enterprise per se, and indeed, by his own
choice, he was receiving no salary while so involved. It would
help his writing and lecturing career, to be sure, in which,
as Stefansson was well aware, lay the real opportunities for

128 SC, uncatalogued, 1903-07 file, VS to E.H. Perreth
of the editorial department of the London Daily Chronicle,
13 February 1916. Admittedly, the Great War did obscure
Stefansson's achievements in the press. See SC, uncatalogued
1903-06 file, London Chronicle to VS, 21 January 1919. See
pp. 197-98, 244, 264; also, PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson,
16 February [1915].

financial gain once he returned south. But to dismiss his efforts and his penchant for publicity on such crass grounds obscures an important point. As head of the Expedition that he had created he was responsible for more than the management of men and supplies—which he did not do well—and the carrying out of a programme of exploration—which he did boldly and magnificently. As an organizer and promoter he had to put forth the best image possible of the Expedition with a view to securing more funds and support for any future exploratory or other endeavour. Yet such a position held perils. The seeking of publicity put him in a bad light with those who assumed that such pre-occupation meant that he was indifferent to scientific ends. Stefansson perhaps was, more by experience and performance than formal training, a scientist. He was also a first-rate intellectual, and a talented writer. Yet at this juncture he may have tried to be too many types of scientist, possibly over-extending himself. The blood of the renaissance man flowed in his veins. By the end of 1918, however, he was at the zenith of his public career, with virtually all the world at his feet anxious to listen and learn; and to act—or so Stefansson thought.

130 In 1921, for example, Stefansson claimed he had earned between $20,000–30,000 in the previous year. He stated then that he had not received pay while in the North, but "it is these years which gave me the value as a lecturer...." SC, 1920-26 file, VS to Deputy Minister of Finance, 6 January 1921.

131 "I don't mean to be merely an explorer or merely an ethnologist or merely anything—I want to be what a friendly critic would call an 'all around' man and what a hostile one would refer to as 'a jack-of-all-trades, master of none'. PAC, RMA/18, VS to Mrs. Anderson, 16 February [1915].
CHAPTER VIII
THE ARCTIC EMPIRE OF VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

Vilhjalmur Stefansson returned triumphantly from the Arctic, his mind filled with ideas he felt he must put before the public. Throughout the remainder of his life he effectively and colourfully transmitted his beliefs through books, articles, lectures and televised interviews. In each medium he was to be a success and his stage was not merely Canada but the world.

After the Great War, from his Arctic experiences and speculations, Stefansson was to become a recognized, respected scientific authority on the problems of diet, particularly the now popular high protein-low carbohydrate diet.¹ More

important, Stefansson became an Arctic theorist, an expert commentator and analyst on things northern. Here Stefansson was at his best. His message was short and simple: the Arctic was not a bleak, frozen waste, not a land of perpetual snows, but a region with a habitable climate which must eventually be civilized and developed. He carried his concept of life to his audiences using personal experiences and anecdotes coupled with a seemingly airtight logic that only a fool or an "illiterate"--to use Stefansson's words--would dispute.

Stefansson's crusade to educate, or more precisely re-educate, his fellow man brought him personal prestige and success in Great Britain, the United States, and especially Canada. The halls of power beckoned to him, and after his return from the Arctic in 1918, Stefansson experienced what it was like to possess real influence amongst politicians, statesmen, and bureaucrats. The Dominion was to be his laboratory; Ottawa, the North, and his own personality, were to be the elements in his experiment. Success or failure would depend on a proper mixture of each of these ingredients, but in large measure on Stefansson himself. This is particularly evident when one examines his ideas and their impact on the Canadian business community and official circles, then looks at Stefansson's attempt to put these theories into practice--notably the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission, and the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Corporation, one of the first major commercial enterprises in the Canadian Far North.
Some of Stefansson's ideas were unique and novel while others were not, but he had a supreme knack of taking apparently unrelated ideas and moulding them into all-embracing new theories. This was his particular genius; he was a man of wide scope and vision, who adopted many contemporary notions to form a complete theory of Arctic development. Much of the credit belongs to others, as Stefansson admitted, but he felt his task was to shout out to the public what he had learned. Besides, when one is among many who advocate a "revolutionary idea"—such as transpolar commerce by aircraft—"credit goes to the one who first puts it into print."² Fame was his mistress.

The publication in 1922 of what he considered his "favorite" book,³ *The Northward Course of Empire*, capped his Arctic and intellectual career. Most of the book's chapters had appeared in other publications such as *World's Work* and the *National Geographic Magazine*, but now all his ideas, arguments and logic were brought together in extremely well integrated form under one cover.

² SC, National Geographic-1922 file, VS to Gilbert Grosvenor, 29 May 1922.

³ Inscription by VS to Aileen Larkin, 24 July 1923, in flyleaf of Stefansson's *The Northward Course of Empire* (London, 1922). This particular copy is in the possession of the writer.
In his own arguments, Stefansson incorporated the "scientific" conclusions of others, while indicating that he had derived his approach independently "from a consideration of the facts of the world we live in." 4 Most useful for his own ideas was a graph which appeared in an article, "The Coldward Course of Progress," by S. Columb GilFillian, Professor of Social Sciences at the University of the South. 5

![Chart No. 1. The Path of Supremacy](chart)

Like Ellsworth Huntingdon, GilFillian was a geographic

4 Stefansson, Northward, p. v.

determinist who contended that higher civilization and empire-building were functions of latitude. A subtle racist connotation was implicit in the argument that the "Path of Supremacy", throughout history was directly related to mean temperature, for it pointed to northern nations as the supreme powers of the future. Stefansson wished to show that nations which lay in the higher latitudes, especially those bordering the Arctic seas, would be the future empires of the world. It was a logical conclusion; if one accepted the trends portrayed on GilFillan's graph and assumptions.

For Canada to realize its potential for Empire—as well as the United States, with its Alaskan Frontier—Stefansson felt that the prejudices that prevented national development had to be removed. Citizens and responsible politicians must be educated to look upon the North as something valuable, something that could be exploited to achieve supremacy. Otherwise Canada's natural path of history would be perverted. Antiquated notions must be exposed and obliterated:

We have not come to the northward limit of commercial progress. There was many a pause but no stop to the westward course of empire until we came to the place where East is West. In that sense only is there a northward limit to progress. Corner lots in Rome were precious when the banks of the Thames had no value; the products of Canada were little beyond furs and fish when the British and French agreed in preferring Guadalupe. But values had shifted north since then and times have changed. Times will continue to change. There is no northern boundary beyond which productive enterprise cannot go till North meets North on the opposite
shores of the Arctic Ocean as East has met West on the Pacific.\textsuperscript{6} Stefansson proclaimed himself a charter member of the "National University of Polite Unlearning," an institution one of his Harvard professors, Samuel McChord Crothers, had suggested, as a means of dispelling popular myths as well as false information.\textsuperscript{7}

The "Far North", Stefansson contended, was not unfriendly or hostile, but was "destined to be colonized in the same general way as were the Western prairies of the United States half a century ago, by the same type of people, and with a resulting civilization not fundamentally dissimilar."\textsuperscript{8} The North was habitable—his own experiences and survival had proved that, and living in the North would become profitable once its resources and position were properly exploited. The North was, in Stefansson's estimation, not only "Liveable" but "Fruitful" in terms of its native flora and fauna. Although very little was known about its mineral resources, the North did have resources which she could offer the world. For example, the domestication of such grazing animals as the musk-ox could make Canada a great meat supplier for the rest of the world. Canada's northern shoreline controlled a large portion of the Arctic basin—in Stefansson's view of the new Mediterranean—and once the Dominion understood its

\textsuperscript{6}Stefansson, \textit{Northward}, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.
strategic position, Canada could establish herself as a world power, immeasurably enhancing the strength of the British Empire. The pace of this advance depended on the strength of the "misknowledge" that had to be overcome, and the amount of "unlearning" that had to be done.

It was necessary both to show what the Arctic had to offer to men of vision and enthusiasm, and how enterprising individuals could tap and exploit its resources. The Canadian North was on the shore of a polar Mediterranean, a Mediterranean which because of insufficient technology up to the 1920's had remained frozen and inaccessible. But now Stefansson saw in such technological advances as dirigibles, airplanes, and submarines--primitive as they may seem to us--the dawn of a new epoch for the Arctic and for Canada. These new machines could be readily adapted to service the top of the world and would become the vehicles of commerce in the future.

Even though the airplane did not have the sophistication and capabilities of today's craft, Stefansson, along with many of the others who were more enthusiastic than he initially, thought that transpolar air flights were quite

---

9One of the earliest exponents of the use of the airplane in the Arctic was Robert E. Peary who as early as 1910 predicted the utility of the airplane in northern latitudes. In 1913, he became an honorary member of the Aero Club of America (founded in 1905), and from that time he urged the United States to attempt polar flying and become strong in the air generally. W.H. Hobbs, Peary, (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1936), pp. 429-443. Stefansson's genius, however, was to see the advantages of flying over the Arctic in terms of shortening distances and lines of commerce, as opposed to pure exploration. Initially, Stefansson had little use for heavier than air craft in the Arctic regions, believing
feasible and attractive. Airplanes, could be used, but with their short range they would have to hop across the polar Mediterranean using a series of fueling stations: some of them islands already discovered in the Arctic archipelago—Spitzbergen and Wrangel Island—and others still to be discovered which in all probability would be found by airborne exploration. Flying over the Arctic would immeasurably cut down the time and distance between such diverse points as London and Tokyo by as much as 6,000 miles.

Equally important was the role of the submarine in the development of Arctic transportation and commerce. This was actually Stefansson's special pet, partly because the idea, based on his observations of whales breaking their way through the ice to create breathing holes, was highly original.

that the submarine, if anything, would be the most natural and logical vehicle, until aviation developed further: "...the airplanes had better wait until they can cross the Atlantic." Toronto Globe, 11 November 1918. According to Burt McConnell, a one-time secretary to Stefansson who tried to organize an aerial rescue expedition for Stefansson in 1915, Stefansson toyed with the idea of taking airplanes on the 1913 expedition but was hesitant about their reliability. B. McConnell, "The Airplane in Arctic Exploration", Scientific American, CXV (September, 1916), p. 295.

10 Others, too, had similar ideas concerning submarine and under-ice work at the turn of the century. See Simon Lake, The Submarine in War and Peace, (Philadelphia, 1918); See also, SC, Submarine-1919 file, Simon Lake to VS, 25 March 1919. Lake gives the data on how an undersea cargo vessel should be constructed; including some novel devices: Shock absorbers, upside down skis, and a snorkel device for breathing. Stefansson always made a point, though, of asserting—correctly—that his own idea had been arrived at independently.
A properly constructed submarine, based on the lessons learned during the Great War and using gyroscopic compasses, would be capable of performing the task:

The submarine is undoubtedly the best mechanical device of the three ie.: aeroplane, dirigible, and submarine, and a boat has been designed which can navigate at a depth of 200 feet for a distance of 110 miles without coming to the surface, and which can carry supplies enough to give it a cruising radius of over 5000 miles which is more than double the diameter of the polar basin. As the polar ice is never more than 120 feet thick, and as it is broken up into innumerable cakes and separated by the same bodies of water that would give the aeroplane spots to land in, the ice is seen to be really an advantage and not a disadvantage for submarine operations, for we can count on always having quiet water in which to come to the surface which is by no means true of any ordinary ocean or sea. As we know that submarines have already crossed the Atlantic, and as anyone whose knowledge both of submarines, and the polar sea can readily comprehend that the ice is an advantage and not a hindrance, it is obvious that if crossing the Atlantic Ocean is practicable, the crossing of an icy ocean is doubly practicable.11

Stefansson may not have completely understood the technical aspects of undersea navigation, but he did have the genius to foresee how such a development could be put to good use in the Arctic. The day would come, be it five or fifty years, when such devices, he was certain, would turn the Arctic into a Mediterranean. Countries such as England,

11 Sc, Submarine-1919 file, VS to Gilbert Grosvenor, 10 February 1919; Cf. NGS, VS to Grosvenor, 22 February 1919.
Japan, Norway, would become "neighbours across the northern sea." Yet to make such notions attractive, Stefansson sincerely believed that the Arctic would have to prove that it had the potential he ascribed to it. To this end he launched a well-publicized campaign for the domestication of the musk-ox. Preaching was to be put into practice.

* * *

Before Stefansson came to believe in the domestication of species like the caribou, reindeer, and musk-ox, he devoted his energies to their protection and conservation. In 1914, for instance, he was anxious that the Dominion government through the offices of the Prime Minister, Robert Borden, and

12 Stefansson, Northward, p. 199. Well within fifty years Stefansson did see many of his prophecies become fact. In the 1920's there was a spate of Arctic explorations and adventures involving the airplane, led by Admiral Byrd, Ben Eilsen, Hubert Wilkins, to name only a few. In 1959, the nuclear-powered, sonar equipped, U.S.S. Nautilus, silently traversed the Arctic Ocean; the same year the U.S.S. Skate surfaced at the North Pole. These events were in large part the culmination of ideas Stefansson had as early as 1914 and the abortive attempt in 1931 by his friend Sir Hubert Wilkins to try under-ice navigation using a modified submarine. Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 300-02. Just before the commander of the Skate sailed for the Pole, he came to see Stefansson and "had a long talk about the problems involved..." Ibid., p. 301. From the North Pole, Calvert, the skipper of the Skate, sent Stefansson a warm note of thanks, mentioning that memorial services were being held for Wilkins (died 1958), the other pioneer in the idea. Ibid., p. 301-02.
the influential Clifford Sifton, chairman of the Committee on Conservation, should prepare a broad plan for the conservation of the natives and fauna of the Arctic. Contending that he had "more definite information about the resources of certain districts than...anyone else," Stefansson urged the government of Canada to take prompt action. Unhappy about the desperate situation of the disease-ridden and debauched Mackenzie delta Eskimo who had been exposed to civilization, Stefansson tried to ensure that the relatively untouched "prosperous, well-dressed, healthy, and contented Eskimos of the Coronation Gulf area be protected along with their means of support."  

Two main things were to be done. First, it was necessary

[to] protect these healthy people from the incoming of contagious and especially epidemic diseases now absent among them, and especially from those which medical science is, up to the present, unable to cope with such as measles and (to a lesser degree) syphilis[.]  

The conservation of the Eskimo, after all, was a conservation of natural resources, argued Stefansson, "for it is his presence alone that renders this section a source of possible profit to traders." Apart from humanitarian reasons, the only

13PAC, Borden Papers, VS to Sir Clifford Sifton, 8 February 1914.

14PAC, Borden Papers, VS to Borden, 8 January 1914.

15Ibid.

16PAC, Borden Papers, VS to Sifton, 8 February 1914.
good Eskimo was a live one, for "[d]ead Eskimo trap no fur, and ill clothed Eskimo, like those of the Mackenzie today trap far less fur than they would otherwise would, for, their cotton garments do not allow them to tend traps except in good weather...." Just as important, and virtually linked with the welfare of the Eskimo, was the protection of the caribou and other "food animals" from "wanton destruction such as was followed to exterminate those of the Mackenzie and Alaska within the last twenty years....(a) to ensure a permanent food and clothing supply to the Eskimo and (b) to conserve for the people of Canada of all races a valuable natural resource of our country in a section which for the present, has no other considerable natural product of value."  

The Eskimo, though, had to face the prospects of increasing contacts with the outside world in all its unseemly forms. As Stefansson suggested, quarantine regulations and game laws, were only a delaying action. This, the Canadian government had recognized early on. The Eskimo inevitably would be caught up in changes, for it was impossible to keep them and the animal species of the North in the grip of even an enlightened system of segregation. Before long Stefansson became convinced the Eskimo would have to adapt to the

17 Ibid.
18 PAC, Borden Papers, VS to Borden, 8 January 1914.
intrusion of the outside world. By using the resources on hand, he would be able to survive. The utility and future of the Eskimo, were to figure largely in Stefansson's later plans regarding the domestication of native herds.

As time went on Stefansson became more impressed with the possibilities of domesticating the musk-ox, rather than the caribou or reindeer. 19 Earlier, Stefansson had advocated the protection and conservation of these northern animals. This theme, like his concern for the Eskimo before the on-slaughter of traders and missionaries, however, was soon forgotten or, at least, given a lower priority. In a 1917 memorandum to Sir Richard McBride, entitled "Possible New Domestic

19 Indeed, a few years before Stefansson's observations concerning the aspect of the fate of the natives and his precious food supply, an attempt had been made to bolster the native economy. In 1910, Earl Grey, Governor General of Canada had suggested "that reindeer be introduced into the Northwest Territory, so that up there these animals may largely solve the problem of transportation during the winter months, furnish a gainful occupation for Indians, half-breeds, and others." The Dominion Parks Branch concurred, and in the following year (1911) 50 reindeer were purchased from Dr. W. T. Grenfell, shipped from St. Anthony Newfoundland, via Quebec and, by September, 1911, 41 of the herd had reached Athabaska Landing. PAC, Borden Papers, Memo [?] to J.B. Harkin, [Commissioner of Dominion Parks], 27 February 1914. What is important to remember here is not the fate of this experiment, which is beyond the scope of this particular study, but that the Canadian government was already aware of the problem, at least to a limited degree. What Stefansson proposed in 1914, and especially after his return in 1918, was that such programmes--of which he may have been unaware--should be expanded and made the backbone of the Arctic economy until more lucrative alternatives were discovered.
Animals for Cold Countries," Stefansson indicated that he was no longer really concerned with conserving large northern animals as he was in breeding certain species and increasing their herd size for domestic purposes. In a sense, this was an aggressive sort of game conservation, tied in with the practical:

The reindeer industry is now well established by the United States Government in Alaska and the herds will, in natural course, doubtless increase till most of the tundra is utilized for pasturage, unless a more profitable use of the ground is discovered. In Asia and Europe the tending of reindeer herds antedates history.

In spite of the ancient character of the industry reindeer are in most if not all places where they are now found, wild to the degree that they must be lassoed as semi-wild cattle of our large ranches must also be lassoed. In Alaska a dog not used to reindeer or a wolf will stampede and scatter an untended herd, and in some cases even herds that have an attendant, and animals are thus frequently lost even when they are not killed by wolves. In bad weather the herds are sometimes hard to control and in inclement springs a large percentage of the fawns die in spite of the best efforts of the herdsmen.

From these points of view the reindeer is, therefore, not an ideal domestic animal for the arctic lands. A further disadvantage is that a reindeer, unlike a sheep, is of no commercial value until after it is killed, except the few that are used as draught animals. True, reindeer are milked in some districts, but they are unsatisfactory as compared with most other milk animals.

This early attitude about the shortcomings of reindeer as a domesticated animal makes interesting reading and leaves

\[20\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, VS to Sir Richard McBride, 9 February 1917.}\]

\[21\text{Ibid.}\]
one to wonder why Stefansson, in league with the Hudson's Bay Company in the early 1920's, pursued the domestication of this species. The downfall of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer project can partly be attributed to the foraging eccentricities of the reindeer outlined in 1917 by Stefansson.

In 1917, Stefansson and his men were more favourably impressed with the possibilities of the musk-ox which acted "more like domestic cattle than does the average Alaskan reindeer herd."\textsuperscript{22} The animals were essentially tame, and even when threatened by dogs or wolves they did not stampede or scatter but grouped together for protection. Furthermore, in Stefansson's view,

\[\text{[a] full grown muskox gives three times as much meat, probably, as a grown reindeer of the same sex and two or three times as much fat. (as to the time it takes each to mature I do not have the facts)... A muskox gives three to four times as much milk as a reindeer. The milk is considered by the white men of our parties, to be better than cow's milk in taste. It differs less from cow's milk than reindeer milk does. It is clearly rich in fat... But the great advantage of the muskox over caribou is that, like sheep, they furnish a large amount of wool annually without having to be killed first.}\textsuperscript{23}

The animal might not be as good a draught animal as the reindeer, nor would its skins make good clothing, but musk-oxen were much more manageable in herds and required little attention, except at calving time.

Stefansson did not consider their domestication in

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
terms of solving the more immediate needs of the Eskimo but felt that such an industry would be for the benefit of the white man and the native alike:

I shall not go into details of how the initial breeding animals could be secured, but it is a simple matter, whether on the mainland while they are not yet exterminated or in the uninhabited arctic islands. Simplest of all would be to set apart, say, Melville Island, as an experimental station. If it should not be deemed proper that I urge this matter publicly while in Government service, I hope to do so when the service is ended. When the southern part of our country becomes densely populated, and with our short Hudson Bay and British Columbia routes to Europe and the Orient, such a pastoral development of Arctic Canada as I have outlined above would become of great commercial importance. That the meat of the muskox would not find a ready market need not be feared. Few persons, as it is, could distinguish it from beef under most forms of modern meat cooking.24

Stefansson sincerely believed "that muskoxen can make a square mile of the Arctic Tundra as valuable as sheep can a square mile of Alberta. The reindeer cannot hope to do the like, nor can the Yak compete in wool or in its power to thrive near the pole."25

So impressed with the possibilities of the musk-ox was Stefansson—"it will be by far the most important result of our expedition"26—that he sent samples of the animals' wool to Prime Minister Borden,27 and, amongst others, Sir Edmund Walker. Walker, for his part, was quite enthusiastic about

---

24 Ibid.


26 SC, W-General-1919 file, VS to Walker, 7 August 1918.

27 SC, Desbarats-1919 file, VS to Borden, 15 March 1917.
the prospects of developing such an industry in the near future, and was to prove a very important ally to Stefansson's crusade. Stefansson also enlisted the support of the aging Theodore Roosevelt, former President of the United States, fellow explorer, adventurer and sportsman, who wished the project well

...as regards the future of the country. Our domestic animals are merely those of Asia, because it was in Asia that civilization first arose, and in consequence, as it penetrated other continents, men found it easier to use the animals already tamed, than to tame new ones...It is a capital misfortune that the African land has not been tamed. It is a capital misfortune that the musk-ox has not been tamed.

Roosevelt promised to do everything he could to back Stefansson's endeavours. Such a connection—although short-lived for Roosevelt died on January 6, 1919—was helpful, of course, and never did Stefansson any harm when it came to name-dropping.

28 SC, W-General-1919 file, Walker to VS, 6 May 1918. Walker had been impressed with Stefansson for a long time, and considered him not only reliable but one of the best living authorities on "our part of the Arctic." University of Toronto Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Sir Edmund Walker Papers [hereafter SEWP], Walker to G.H. Perley, 6 February 1913.

29 Harvard University College Library, Houghton Reading Room, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Theodore Roosevelt to VS, 23 March 1918.

30 Harvard University College Library, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Theodore Roosevelt to VS, 28 October 1918.
as he was wont to do.

Stefansson's first opportunity to publicize the utility of domesticating reindeer and musk-ox came in the late fall of 1918, shortly after he had returned from the North. On 11 November 1918, a very auspicious day when enthusiasm and optimism for the Armistice may have spilled over for his proposals, Stefansson appeared before the Empire Club at Toronto's Massey Hall. There he proposed the creation of a reindeer industry in Canada similar to the one that had been continuously successful in Alaska since 1890. 31 Essentially, Stefansson told his Massey Hall audience what he had spelled out in earlier letters to Canadian officials; and he concluded—again arguing from analogy—

that while this is about the most important project, in my opinion, that is now before Canada in her period of reconstruction after the war,—this particular possible development of the whole of Canada

31 Most of his statistical information came from Jafet Lindeberg, an Alaskan reindeer entrepreneur who was interested in inducing the Canadian government (or private Canadian or British concerns) to domesticate the reindeer in Canada. SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, Lindeberg to VS, 13 August 1918. Stefansson promised to do his best to "further" Lindeberg's reindeer plans, "both for your sake and the sake of the Eskimo," and he did so by publicly mentioning Lindeberg's eagerness for such a project. Stefansson was quite certain his own plans for the musk-ox would not interfere in the least with reindeer work—"in fact the two will go very well together." SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, VS to Lindeberg, 13 August 1918.
as a grazing country—still the more interesting thing. I think, is the fact that the climate of Canada is not all all disagreeable. It is by no means prohibitive of further development. I take it as certain that just as the people of the Euphrates and Crete and Greece and Italy and Spain progressively made mistakes about the countries north of them, so we still undervalue the country north of us; and civilization as high as that which has developed in Ontario, is certain to be developed further north than Ontario, to a distance [that] the wisest of us would be foolish to try to estimate. 32

The reception to this speech warmed the heart of the explorer, particularly the remarks of Sir Edmund Walker, "one of the half dozen biggest men in Canada." 33 Said the president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce,

It is not given to men of many parts of the world to bring into the civilization of Canada a new element; but when Stefansson was born in Manitoba of Icelandic parents he remained some how sufficiently near to the parental stock to bring to this country the feeling of attraction towards the north as opposed to what he has himself been speaking about—the average repulsion of the British stock towards the north. I have spent part of my life for the last thirty years in trying annually to put before the people of Canada the industrial possibilities of this country; and I know that one of the things we have always fought is that man is very much like the dog—he loves the fire, hates cold, and hates the north. It is one of the most difficult things to make Canadians believe in the value of their own country. What Mr. Stefansson had said about the muskox and what can be done in our northern country is no dream. It is a thing of the

32PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, Address to the Empire Club [Toronto], 11 November 1918.

33SC, General Considerations-1918 file, VS to Lee Keedick [Stefansson's lecture manager], 14 November 1918.
most tremendous significance, and something we ought
to weigh: and make up our minds as strenuously as he
does. We have reached the time when the packers of
Canada and the United States will be going to the
Argentine to see what can be made of the vast herds
of animals in that country. We have talked quite
glibly of having as large an area as the United
States, and we talk about having as large a population
in years to [come] as that country. We can never
have that until we take hold of the resources of this
country on which man can exist. Mr. Stefansson has
presented a great subject, a great problem which
should be tried out by the Government. If it is a
failure it will not cost as much as other things in
which mistakes have been made, while if it is
successful it will add to our food supplies for all
time to come. (Hear, Hear.) How can we doubt the north
when we know that the sea in the north is more filled
with pelagic life than anywhere else? There is life
of the most vigorous kind all over that north country.
We as a people have found out what northern blood means.
Surely we have learned in that we are not like our
friends to the South; certainly we have learned that
the hysterical quality that does not lead so much to
action, that has distinguished some of our cousins,
has been more absent in this country; surely we
know that the reserve and strength of character that
is in our northern blood has meant victory in this
war. We ought to be proud of the fact that we are
northern people, and we have not to be afraid to
breast the wave. We should take hold of the north,
and of the one thing that is suggested [by VS], which
will not cost much to demonstrate, and which should be
a great benefit to this country if successful.34

Stefansson had chosen his main backer well, for
after Sir Edmund's remarks, there was a keen desire by other
"strong Canadians" to back him up in the project.35 If this
reaction were properly handled by Stefansson as well as his

34 PAC, RG42, 84+2-38, Address of Sir Edmund Walker,
11 November 1918.

35 SC, General Considerations-1918 file, VS to Keedick,
14 November 1918.
New York lecture manager, Lee Keedick, "a great deal of publicity can be got out of this."

Stefansson's timing seemed perfect, for the Canadian government had already recognized the virtues of establishing such enterprises under private auspices.

On 25 July 1918 while Stefansson was still in the North recovering from his sickness, the Canadian government had granted grazing privileges in North-west Manitoba for thirty years, on an area comprising about 75,850 square miles, to a certain North American Reindeer Company (Inc.) of South Bend, Indiana. The Order-in-Council recited the following argument:

The introduction of reindeer into Alaska by the United States has resulted in an insured food supply for the natives and sufficient means of transportation; and within recent years a considerable quantity of reindeer meat has been available for export to Seattle and other Pacific coast points. It is considered that the northern areas of the Northwest Territories are exceptionally suitable for reindeer. The development of reindeer herds in the territory should be a great value in the matter of an assured food supply for the native population; the utilization of trained reindeer will provide means of transportation and permit effective exploration of the country; and eventually the reindeer herds should contribute substantially to the meat supply of the rest of Canada. However, the introduction of reindeer into northern Canada will necessarily involve considerable risk, and a large expenditure as well as expert handling and if pioneer

---

36 Ibid.
work is undertaken by private individuals or corporations on an extensive scale, sufficient to insure a reasonable success, the Minister is of the opinion that such persons or corporations should receive encouragement from the Dominion to the extent of free grazing privileges for limited term.

The Minister, therefore, recommends that he be authorized to grant permits for free grazing privileges for reindeer, for a period not exceeding thirty years to any persons or corporations who establish bona fides of the enterprise to the satisfaction of the Minister of Interior. 38

Stefansson, apparently, had not only the requisite support from Toronto interests but had a ready-made commitment by the Dominion.

Stefansson was convinced he was the only person who could carry his proposals to fruition. Then, he felt, would be an opportune time to introduce Jafet Lindeberg into the picture. He advised Lindeberg, who was anxious to sell his herds to Canada and who used Stefansson as his agent, to delay his dealings with the Canadian government: "...if you let me work it up as a patriotic and far-sighted development scheme, they almost certainly will come to me for practical advice as to how it can be done." 39 Walker had asked Stefansson to undertake the management of such a project if Sir Edmund and his friends would take the responsibility for securing government support, and Stefansson was certain Ottawa would give its blessing to such an influential clique

38 Ibid.

39 SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, VS to Lindeberg, 16 November 1918.
of Canadian businessmen. The Conservative party, of course, could not forget the vital contribution of the erstwhile Liberal, Walker, and other dissident Toronto Liberals to Borden's campaign during the election of 1911. Lindeberg should wait until Borden returned from Europe which was the appropriate time to broach the subject to the government: "[t]he government at Ottawa is so much Borden that it is difficult to do anything of importance when he is away...."

If you [Lindeberg] don't show your hand at all—if you make the Government no proposition to sell—I feel sure they will place matters in my hands, (either entirely, or by asking my advice.) Walker and the other big men whom I have talked with have agreed that it ought not to be undertaken on a small scale.

The plan I feel like proposing is that you take out of the hands of the Government the whole troublesome stage of educating the natives in the management of the deer. Let the Missionaries (that is the sump thrown to them to make them friendly) nominate certain McKenzie eskimo families that shall take over the deer and let [them]...be shipped to meet your herd at Nome or some other point on the way. You educate them on the way in (in 2 or 3 years) and that way hand over to the Government a fully developed industry at half the cost per head that it costs the Americans to establish it in Alaska.

...I think it would hurt the present prosperous tendency of affairs to have...anyone proposed a sale of deer to the Government—I feel sure I can make them come to you, and if you approach them first people may suspect me of ulterior motives in urging the reindeer industry....I believe the deal would be a good one for Canada and I am prepared to urge it for that reason. If it works well I shall get my reward in whatever credit is attached to having it

40 Ibid.
carried through.41

The correct way to obtain the best support was to wait until the Prime Minister's return, and then "start with a big send-off from Borden."42

At the same time as Stefansson was engaged in convincing Canadian authorities--the winter of 1918-19--he was actively promoting essentially the same scheme in the United States. No doubt he envisaged some sort of co-operation between the two governments to develop the pastoral regions of northern North America.43 Besides, by dividing the effort, if he were unsuccessful in one country he could still hope to obtain some support in the other and thus avoid complete failure. While attending Roosevelt's funeral early in January, 1919, and making speeches at the Yale Club he made important contacts with some of the men whose departments would have a direct interest in the reindeer and musk-ox project. At a luncheon of the National Geographic Society (11 January 1919) Stefansson also met an enthusiastic Governor Riggs of Alaska. The previous day he had a thirty minute interview with Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, at which

41 Ibid.

42 SC, General Considerations-1918 file, VS to Keedick, 14 November 1918.

Stefansson did most of the talking. Lane wanted him to take charge of the musk-ox project and meet the appropriate committee of Congress and to explain his plans, but Stefansson declined his offer of a job. A few days later, on 14 January 1919, he was introduced to William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, by Dr. Albert Shaw, the editor of the Review of Reviews "and we three walked to secy's hotel...[Redfield] was instantly interested in muskox...will co-operate with secy. Lane." Such warm responses certainly brightened Stefansson's hopes that some sort of co-operation could be achieved between the two countries, at least with regard to the musk-ox. A joint musk-ox venture, however, apparently never went beyond the talking stage, though there is good evidence of the interest both governments had in the project and their willingness to co-operate on expenses.

44 SC, Stefansson Diary, 10 January 1919.
46 PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, Report of the Advisory Board on Wild Life Protection, 20 February 1919. Following his initial contacts with American officials, Stefansson had been authorized by the Canadian Wildlife Protection Committee to inform Lane and Redfield that Canada was interested in conferring with the United States regarding the possible co-operation or simultaneous action of the two countries on the musk-ox question. PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, VS to Desbarats, 10 February 1919. (Members of this committee included James White, chairman, J.B. Harkin, Rudolph Anderson and G. Hewitt, Secretary.) This feeler resulted in a meeting of the advisory Board on Wild Life Protection in Ottawa attended by Dr. E.W. Wilson, Chief, Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture as U.S. representative.
Actually, as became apparent to Stefansson later, he was able to make better headway by linking the musk-ox project with that of the domestication of reindeer. Hence, Stefansson began promoting both projects with equal vigour, even though it meant slower progress than pursuing a single objective. Stefansson impressed Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and the man "most actively interested in developing the reindeer industry in Canada," that on the reindeer side everything was ready to proceed, while Lindeberg, waiting in the wings, wrote offering the Canadian government a ready developed industry. Stefansson interested Scott and the Minister of Interior in the Borden government, Arthur Meighen. Both men, according to Stefansson, were "favorable to the reindeer proposition and will back it up in Parliament", and were asking his advice to push the matter through.


48 E.g. SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, Lindeberg to D.C. Scott, 11 February 1919.

49 SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, VS to Lindeberg, 27 February 1919.

50 SC. Lindeberg-1919 file, VS to Lindeberg, 4 March 1919.
Meighen was especially impressed. Stefansson had evoked a vision of the commercial empire of the Canadian North. No person who had Canada's success and future at heart could help but be enraptured by Stefansson's broad strokes:

It may seem that much of the north is inaccessible and that transportation difficulties are an en-separable handicap, but this will seem so only to those who fail to realize the development of our West. It is a common thing when talking with the pioneers of Vancouver and Seattle to hear stories of how Easterners of forty or fifty years ago were stoutly of the opinion that that country would never come of value because it was "so far away from everywhere." Just as the Canadian Pacific and other railroads crawled slowly westward, so will other railways move north, and their pace will not be snail-like if we take to heart the lesson of the past and realize that these railways...are going to become outlets for vast natural resources. Of course, as long as we adhere to the blind dogma of the worthlessness of the north, it will appear obvious that the building of railways to the northward is merely a waste of labor and good money.

Stefansson was confident, for example, that the railway from Edmonton to Fort McMurray would greatly enhance the transportation possibilities of the entire Mackenzie River system, a transportation system with the same potential for tapping the rich interior as the Hudson Bay route.

---

51 PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, Meighen to C.C. Ballyntyne, [Minister of Marine and Fisheries], 22 March 1919.

52 PAC, RG42, 84-2-38, VS to Meighen, [?] March 1919.

53 Ibid.
resigned to the fact that many people would scoff at his schemes as not only grandiose but foolhardy, even though "[m]atters of that sort are neither visions nor prophecy; they are merely calculations from reliable data."\textsuperscript{54}

In any case, Meighen supported Stefansson's arguments to the point of arranging for him to address a joint session of the House of Commons and Senate to popularize the project; and on Tuesday, 6 May, at 10 A.M. Stefansson faced the honourable members in the Railway Committee Room. This unusual public appearance, a powerful indication of the extent of Stefansson's growing influence in the Canadian capital, probably did more than anything else to bring him into the halls of official authority.

On this occasion, Stefansson put forward his plans, both in terms of Canada's future and in humanitarian terms as well. Canada could help overcome the world's present and future food shortages. Northern Canada with her "undoubted resources" and a "million square acres [sic] of excellent grazing land" was "on the threshold of the same sort of steady development as that which has made our middle west one of the great food producing regions of the world... If we do it [i.e.: domesticate the reindeer and musk-ox] and do it on a large scale...we shall through these two animals within the next twenty years convert northern Canada from a land of practically no value, to the great permanent wool

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid.
and meat producing country of the Western Hemisphere." The inspirational and apparently sound nature of the presentation coupled with Stefansson's personable style and reputation, and the obvious backing of Meighen, took hold of the assembled legislators who received a dazzling glimpse at the potential of Canada's North. Stefansson whetted the appetites of the leaders of a victorious, optimistic, patriotic country by holding out new prospects for Canada in the post-war world. He gauged the result of his speech as "a rousing success," and he was correct.57

After measuring Stefansson's impact, Meighen sprang into action in typical political fashion, by recommending to the cabinet that a royal commission be established to look into the matter thoroughly. To his close friend, J.S. McLean, manager of the Harris Abattoir Co. (later Canada Packers Limited) of Toronto, he wrote privately:

I am thinking of recommending to Council, the appointment of a commission to study and report upon the possibilities of developing the musk-ox and reindeer industry in Northern Canada....Recently I had [Stefansson] address the members of the Commons and Senate, and his speech made a pronounced impression. I have a lot of respect for the opinion of Theodore Roosevelt, which on this subject was to the effect that the domestication of cattle and other domestic

55 SC, WIMF, Address to the House of Commons and Senate, 6 May 1919.

56 SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, VS to Lindeberg, 14 May 1919.

57 E.g. PAC, MG26/1, Meighen Papers, Meighen to J.S. McLean [Harris Abattoir Co. of Toronto], 9 May 1919; PAC, Desbarats Diary, 10 May 1919.
animals as distinguished from the presently undomesticated animals, was merely accidental, and that the proper method of utilizing the northland is by taking possession of, and cultivating the animals native thereto, rather than by forcing the cultivation there, of animals native to milder climates. You are aware of course of the success that has attended the development of the reindeer industry in Northern Alaska by the United States.

The project[,] in essence, is a business project. My idea is to have a report on it by a body of businessmen in whose personnel an element of the imaginative will have a place. Would you permit me to include your name among the recommended? Council may not agree with my proposal, but should my colleagues be persuaded I am anxious that you be a member of the commission. So far, I have written to no other, and, will treat your reply as confidential.58

Needless to say McLean accepted the offer "[b]ut I warn you that I know nothing of Musk-ox or Reindeer. I have never seen them except in a zoo."59 Certainly this would enhance his impartiality. And there was little likelihood that Meighen would not get his Royal Commission.

One wonders why the Canadian government embarked upon the course of creating a Royal Commission, when for all intents and purposes a government policy had been established on the question almost one year prior to the Commission's

58 PAC, Meighen Papers, Meighen to McLean, 9 May 1919.

59 PAC, Meighen Papers, McLean to Meighen, 14 May 1919.
creation and even before Stefansson's earnest campaigning. The North American Reindeer Company had received the Canadian government's blessing and support without any protracted investigation. No doubt it will remain, like so many other things, another mysterious example of the workings of inner government.

Perhaps the introduction of the element of the musk-ox necessitated such an investigation; only at a later stage, after Stefansson had devoted his time exclusively to the musk-ox, were the two species combined in a comprehensive plan. The Royal Commission was a convenient forum to publicize the domestication of the reindeer, and also the project closer to Stefansson's heart, the domestication of the musk-ox.

I, personally, think and I find that nearly everyone entitled to an opinion agrees with me that musk-ox is likely to prove a better domestic animal than the reindeer for all purposes except rapid transportation. But, of course, the development of the musk-ox will be a slow matter. The reindeer development can be exactly as rapid as we like for we can purchase whatever breeding stock we are willing to pay for in Norway...and in Aalska....60

On 20 May a Royal Commission was authorized to investigate the potentialities and viability of such industries, "from a business and national standpoint," since, as the Order-in-Council recited, "there are good grounds for believing

60 Sc, WIMF, VS to Reverend W. Henry Fry, [Brantford, Ontario], 30 January 1920.
that the Canadian north may become a great permanent meat and wool producing area.... "61 Stefansson could scarcely help being overjoyed; the government had appropriately recognized his efforts by making him one of the commissioners, 62 and he could trust that most of the members of the commission were sympathetic to his aims. The only dark cloud on the horizon, from Stefansson's point of view, was the appointment of John Rutherford as chairman. Stefansson rather indiscreetly expressed himself as "heartbroken" over this decision, which to him was "a method of sabotage, of 'killing in committee'. I shall be greatly and agreeably surprised if this commission does anything."63 Rutherford, according to Stefansson, seemed a "pessimist of the possibilities of the north and only mildly interested in our project."64 He would have preferred someone more favourable, like Colonel J.S. Dennis, head of the C.P.R.'s Department of Colonization and Development.65 Nevertheless, with the commission Stefansson had won his vehicle for official


62 The other members of the commission were James B. Harkin of Meighen's Department of the Interior, John Stanley McLean of Harris Abattoir; the chairman was John Gunion Rutherford of the Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners.


64 SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, VS to Meighen, 26 May 1919.

65 Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 219-20. See also SC, WIMF, VS to A. Ford [House of Commons Press Gallery], 26 May 1919; VS to J.J. Mitchell, [private secretary to Meighen], 26 May 1919; VS to Colonel J.S. Dennis, 24 May 1919.
publicity, and it was an extremely useful step in his venture into the world of private business, for the establishment of the Musk-ox and Reindeer Commission imparted and air of legitimacy to Stefansson's contentions. As the "expert", Stefansson was bound to be the key member, since his colleagues looked to him for advice and suggestions as to who should be interviewed. Naturally he was more than ready to provide them with such a list, and he personally recruited witnesses whose views would support his position.

The commission was appointed on 20 May 1919 but it was not until 24th January the following year that the first of the four public hearings was held, the other three, also held in Ottawa, being on 4-5 February, 29-30 April, and 12 May 1920. In all, 35 expert witnesses, whose testimony filled 586 pages, appeared before the board. That testimony constituting two bound volumes, was summarized in Appendix I, of the report, but despite the commission's recommendation

66 SC, WIMF, VS to Rutherford, 14 August 1919.


68 See Appendix II.

it was never published. The conclusions and recommendations alone were published, but not until two years later—indicative of the low priority that the newly-elected Liberal government gave to the entire subject. The published findings appeared in a slim 99-page report, of which roughly 58 pages were additional Appendices. Such limited publication and belated distribution indicates that the commission was no better than a partial success for Stefansson who, indeed, ultimately resigned from it.

For instance, the findings of the musk-ox were mixed and were more guarded than were Stefansson's original appraisals, which, admittedly, had not been based on extensive data. This applied particularly to the supposed utilization of musk-ox wool. The commission did not fully sustain Stefansson's claims. Stefansson saw the domestication of reindeer and musk-ox as a means of making Canada's North one of the great meat and wool producing areas of the world. According to the commission's findings, though, the utilization of musk-ox wool was problematical:

In itself the wool is of fair quality, but... no machinery has so far been perfected which will successfully separate it from the coarse hair of the outer coat, with which it becomes mixed when

70 Ibid., p. 11. Not only was public attention focused on the investigation during these years, but for years after, into the mid-1930's, there were demands for copies of the report from aspiring entrepreneurs and the public in general. See PAC, Department of Interior, RG22, 2630, Reindeer and Musk-Ox: Distribution of Report.
being shed.

The shedding is a gradual process, the new wool, taking the place of the old as this is shed, and there is, therefore, grave doubt as to the practicability of removing the latter until it has been properly replaced by the fresh growth.

In this connection it will be noted that Professor Hornaday states that one of the musk-ox in the New York Zoological Gardens, from which the old wool was combed, died some three weeks later from pneumonia.71 Stefansson, of course, had never experienced this phenomenon simply because the wool he had gathered from carcasses killed for food. These discouraging prospects held out for musk-ox wool severely discounted Stefansson's rosy picture of the future of the Canadian North and the place of the musk-ox in its development. The report conceded that the flesh of the younger animals was very palatable, and acknowledged the fact that musk-ox were "admirably" suited for domestication.72 Yet it expressed a greater present concern about the dwindling number of musk-ox and called rather for their conservation than their exploitation.73

As for the reindeer industry, about which Stefansson

71 RD-MO Report, p. 16. Work in the mid-1920's by Alfred Farrer Barker, professor of textile industries at Leeds University, agreed with the Commission about the quality of the wool, but suggested that the technology had been developed to separate the coarse and fine hair. Stefansson, "Farming Without Barns", Harper's Magazine, #1148, (January, 1946), p. 55. This may have been later comfort to Stefansson, but Stefansson had to live with the Commission's findings in 1922 and 1923.

72 Ibid., p. 17.

73 Ibid., p. 15.
had greater reservations, the commission, impressed by the Alaskan experiments, suggested that a number of experimental herds be developed in the most suitable areas for the support of the Eskimos. Such industries might provide food supplies for future white entrepreneurs who might develop mineral and other natural resources in the North, and "lay the foundation for a possible future commercial meat industry." Noting the newly-launched Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company venture on Baffin Island in which Stefansson was involved, the report advised a wait-and-see policy for the government:

In view... of the enormous areas available, there is no reason why many similar enterprises should not be established in Northern Canada.

Further, should this scheme [the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company] prove abortive or for any reason fail to succeed, much valuable time would be sacrificed, whereas the development by the Government itself, of several small experimental herds, in different carefully selected localities, would largely remove the elements of doubt and uncertainty, and tend to encourage private enterprise and investment.

Essentially, then, the report was extremely cautious and conservative with its recommendations, something far removed from Stefansson's own attitudes and from the purposes for which he had initiated the committee.

---

74 See Appendix III.

75 RD-MO Report, pp. 21-22.

76 Ibid., p. 22. See Appendix IV.
By nature, Stefansson was not the type of man to go slow, especially when he had the courage of his convictions—as he always had. The first of the seven hearings were held a full six months after the creation of the commission; an inexcusable loss of time in Stefansson's eyes. His impatience was accentuated by his certainty—perhaps more correctly his delusion—that the commission agreed with his "logical" ideas but were prolonging the investigation for formality's sake. 77 This manner of procedure—to him typical of government red tape—was not to his taste. This was no time for experiment, but for action. Stefansson wanted to take the immediate initiative, without waiting for the final recommendations, which he sensed would be couched in very conservative language. By early March, 1920, after the second round of protracted and tedious hearings, he could wait no longer. He determinedly pushed ahead and forced the pace.

On 8 March 1920, Stefansson applied for a lease which would enable him to create a "Reindeer Syndicate" to carry out the domestication of reindeer. 78 Once he had the lease he hoped

---

77 Stefansson expressed his disappointment over the slowness of the commission as early as June, 1919, barely a month after the investigation had been authorized. SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, VS to Lindeberg, 15 June 1919; VS to Lindeberg, 16 June 1919.

78 SC, WIMF, VS to Meighen, 8 March 1920. See also SC, Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company [hereafter HBRC], Stefansson's "Memorandum re Reindeer Syndicate", n.d. [probably winter of 1919-20].
he would be able to interest a "sound company" with "energy and discretion backed by sufficient capital" to carry his plans through to their ultimate success. By this time he was thinking in terms of the Hudson's Bay Company rather than his earlier associate, Jafet Lindeberg.

Stefansson realized that a conflict of interest existed between his membership on the Reindeer Commission and his application for a lease; therefore he resigned from the commission on March 12, 1920, "feeling that I can almost certainly do more for the good of the cause outside than I can do in it." This resignation would have been more proper had he had handed it in before requesting the lease, or before he had contacted certain business concerns. Some time in December, 1919 or January, 1920, Stefansson had made contact with the Hudson's Bay Company, his old associate Jafet Lindeberg, who had supplied him with many statistics and arguments, was

79Ibid.

80 SC, Hudson's Bay-Baffin Island Reindeer Project-1920 file, VS to J.B. Harkin, 29 March 1920.


82 SC, Hudson's Bay Company-1919 file, Lindeberg to VS, 15 May 1919. Lindeberg had been hurt by the "complications" and delays in Ottawa. Like Stefansson he had been overly optimistic, but had committed himself much further, purchasing the ship Polar Bear expressly for the reindeer venture he and Stefansson had worked out. "...[A]nd now it is up to you [Stefansson] to get me the business so that I can make use of the boat." SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, Lindeberg to VS, 16 June
left in the lurch.

The lease from the government was not granted until 1 June 1920, in the interval Stefansson was in England courting the Hudson's Bay Company with his submission for a "Reindeer Syndicate", a well-packaged scheme from a business standpoint. On the afternoon of 25 March 1920 he attended a board meeting of the Hudson's Bay Company, which included Sir Robert Kindersley (governor), Charles Sale (deputy governor), and Vivian Hugh Smith of J.P. Morgan, where he outlined his proposals and answered questions. He followed this up by

---

1919. Early in the Royal Commission's proceedings Stefansson had scuttled Lindeberg's prospects, informing Rutherford that in the light of talks with meat packers and "others who have dealt with reindeer in Alaska" he was "more sure than ever that no adequate number of reindeer can be secured in Alaska." SC, WIMF VS to Rutherford, 14 August 1919, Stefansson contended that only some 2000 head could be secured from Alaska with the permission of the American government and these would be available for domestication and breeding only in the Yukon and near the Mackenzie River. Ibid. For some reason, Stefansson failed to mention to Rutherford, Lindeberg's ready offer to supply up to 4000 head if the Canadian government so desired. SC, Lindeberg-1919 file, Lindeberg to Scott, 11 February 1919, Lindeberg certainly appears to have had the available stock, but his chances of securing a contract were severely handicapped by his associate's personal assessments of his capability and the Alaskan situation, and he never succeeded in interesting the Canadian government in his readiness to do business.

83SC, HBRC, Indenture between the Government of Canada and Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 1 June 1920.

84SC, Stefansson Diary, 25 March 1920, Sir Edmund Walker had provided him with a letter of introduction to Kindersley. SEWP, VS to Walker, 1 May 1920.
personal contacts with Charles Sale, the man he felt held the key to success, since the powerful, ambitious Sale appeared "fully alive to greatness of northern development possible and aware of simplicity of carrying out." Sale suggested that the musk-ox plans might even be attempted after one year if the reindeer project proved successful. Stefansson, naturally, was elated, for "[w]hen I came to England I found it necessary to advance no arguments to them, for they were already committed to the proposition and told me that the thing we needed to discuss was the policy of the Canadian government and the details of operation. In principle, they said they were already committed to the enterprise."

Anticipating the formal arrangements with the company on April 12th, Stefansson made preparations to send Storkerson to Norway to secure reindeer and Lapp families; and he proposed that his former Arctic companion be made manager of the station. However, Stefansson was betrayed by over confidence. Two days later, on the 14th, he was curtly informed by Sale that "it [had become] apparent that annual outlays of a substantial nature would be required and we have also formed the opinion, 

85 SC, Stefansson Diary, 26 March 1920.
86 SC, Stefansson Diary, 8 April 1920.
87 SC, Northern Development-1920 file, VS to Rutherford, 12 April 1920.
88 SC, HBRC, VS to Storkerson, 12 April 1920.
contrary to our first impressions, that the project will entail various problems requiring time and attention which we cannot afford to give at this juncture."\textsuperscript{89} Sale, whom Stefansson trusted implicitly, charged that Stefansson was unreasonable in striving to establish such a large venture in the same year; Stefansson had failed to consider the tremendous amount of work that would be required of the Hudson's Bay Company of making arrangements for such items as coal and supplies.\textsuperscript{90}... we cannot too strongly urge the utmost conservation at this time and the danger of engaging in any operations for which one cannot see clearly both the means and the end."\textsuperscript{91}

This new position might have dashed Stefansson's project then and there, but instead, on the 15th of April, he began intensive first-hand negotiations to persuade the company to reconsider. He pushed ahead and secured promises that the company would enter into certain arrangements with him that year, provided Stefansson secured the lease he had applied for. The Hudson's Bay Company would then incorporate a limited liability company under Canadian jurisdiction with a share capital of $200,000 divided into 200 shares, 170 shares

\textsuperscript{89} SC, HBRC, Sale to VS, 14 April 1920,

\textsuperscript{90} SC, Hudson's Bay and Baffin Island Reindeer Project-1920 file, Sale to [Hudson's Bay Company] "agent" [New York City], 26 May 1920,

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
being retained by the company or their "friends"; 10 shares (i.e., $10,000) to be allotted to Stefansson "credited as fully paid in consideration for [his] services in obtaining the concession." Stefansson accepted the proposal with only minor modifications and no hesitation. The rather small commission was no obstacle to his eagerness to enter the world of high finance.

Now it was up to Stefansson to make good his part of the bargain. The lease was still hanging fire; it would be forthcoming, but would need some pushing on the part of Stefansson. The Canadian cabinet doubtless had more important matters before it, but if its attitude changed and it became obstructive, this would be "merely through stupidity." Stefansson's main argument was to use the possible British investment as leverage:

The important point for Canada is this: if Russia were now under a stable government... British capital would go instantly into the reindeer business there, but this capital is for the time being available for Canada.... The Russian situation makes this year most favorable for inducing them to embark on the enterprise in Canada... If the government of Russia becomes stable they consider the opportunity for investment there much better than in Canada.

Indeed, as Stefansson advised J.S. McLean, the Hudson's Bay

---

92 SC, HBRC, Sale to Stefansson, 16 April 1920.

93 For Stefansson's disappointment with this business arrangement and his interest in personal financial gain see pp. 386-67.


95 SC, "M" General-1920 file, VS to Meighen, 26 April
Company had also founded a Hudson's Bay North Russia Company, with a capitalization of £100,000 (i.e., $500,000), to tap Russian fur and reindeer resources. The time was right for Canada to act, argued Stefansson.

On 1 June 1920, Stefansson received his lease to the southwest portion of Baffin Island, in the form of exclusive grazing privileges for his reindeer on the western portion of the island south of 68° North—113,900 square miles in all. In addition he was given the right to maintain and operate butchering, canning, tanning or other establishments directly related to the reindeer industry as well as making harbour improvements in government-approved areas in connection with the traffic created by the herds. A little later, the government permitted Stefansson to transfer the lease to the Hudson's Bay Company, provided that stock of the new company might be bought by no one but Stefansson and legitimate shareholders of the company.

The Hudson's Bay Company carried out its part of the bargain. The trustees of the newly-formed Hudson's Bay

1920. Meighen apparently was disposed to grant the lease, subject to Cabinet approval, but the main stumbling block appears to have been some hesitancy on the part of the Department of the Interior. SEWP, VS to Walker, 1 May 1920.


97 SC, HBRC, Indenture between Government of Canada and Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 1 June 1920.

98 SC, Hudson's Bay-Baffin Island Reindeer Project-1920 file, W.W. Cory [Deputy Minister, Department of the Interior], to VS, 19 June 1920.
Reindeer Company, Sir Augustus Nanton and Edward Fitzgerald, gave Stefansson, in consideration for his services vis-à-vis the lease and the transfer, 10 shares of the capital stock, with option of buying a further 20 shares at par value not later than 31 October 1922. Also, after six calving seasons he would receive a bonus of another five shares fully paid for by the company. Stefansson was also to be employed by the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company "in an advisory capacity to give expert advice and perform other special services of an advisory nature" with a relatively small salary. Finally, he had the option of becoming one of the directors of the company.\(^9\)\(^9\) The lease was formally transferred by Stefansson to the company on 6 November 1920.\(^10\)

This was quite an achievement for Stefansson. Within two years of his return from the Arctic, besides his many other activities, he had managed to impress his ideas upon one of the most respectable financial concerns in the world and had become a director in one of its most promising subsidiaries. His reputation as an Arctic explorer and authority on Arctic

\(^9\)SC, HBRC, Agreement between Vilhjalmur Stefansson, party of the first part, and Sir Augustus Nanton and Edward Fitzgerald, parties of the second part, who are trustees on behalf of the..., Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company, 30 June 1920,

\(^10\)SC, Stefansson Diary, 6 November 1920,
matters, his membership on the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission and the backing of some of the most influential men in Canada who believed in him, no doubt added weight to the Hudson's Bay Company decision. But everything thereafter was downhill.

Stefansson was eager to do everything in his power to make the company succeed, but as he afterward confessed, he was tied up with so many other commitments—lecturing all across North America, planning for the Wrangel Island expedition, writing his story of the expedition of 1913-18—that he could not push the project "as it should have been pushed," 101 Besides, the new company, like its parent, refused to rush headlong into such an untried project at Stefansson's urging. 102 He suggested that the newspaper publicity should play down the profit motive, and emphasize instead the public-spirited character of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The evidence given before the Royal Commission on Northern Resources is such that (I know personally) the members of the Commission are now inclined to view that enterprise will be profitable for anyone who undertakes it and manages it competently. But the commission are also of the opinion that if the government were itself to undertake it, there might fail through the sort of mismanagement to be expected of the government enterprise. If the people understand that the Hudson's Bay Company has in a way stepped into the breach and volunteered with its resources and experience to test out on behalf of the country the practicability of this undertaking, they will, I think, conceive a kindly interest in our work without necessarily gathering that there are any fabulous profits in view. 103

101 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 266.
102 Ibid.
103 SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 23 June 1920.
Stefansson was moving too quickly perhaps for the Hudson's Bay Company and its subsidiary, who were not interested in publicity or other schemes. In the winter following the official incorporation, Jafet Lindeberg indicated he was now in deep financial trouble and was anxious to sell out his reindeer interests in Alaska.\textsuperscript{104} Stefansson urged the trustees of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company to seize the opportunity to buy out Lindeberg's more than 33,000 head as well as packing plants,\textsuperscript{105} and expand their horizons to Alaska as well as Canada. But a meeting of the directors, deprived of Stefansson's eloquent persuasiveness because of his chautauqua lecturing engagements,\textsuperscript{106} decided it was "inadvisable to consider the acquisition [of the] companies mentioned or purchase their reindeer."\textsuperscript{107}

Stefansson persisted in other directions, suggesting that the company expand immediately to take advantage of its position and Lindeberg's plight, and establish reindeer herds in the vicinity of the mouth of the Mackenzie River. As early as 5 November 1920,\textsuperscript{108} he put forth plans to expand to Wrangel

\textsuperscript{104} SC, Lindeberg-1920 file, Lindeberg to VS, 22 December 1920.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 24 January 1921.
\textsuperscript{107} SC, HBRC, Fitzgerald to VS, 19 April 1921.
\textsuperscript{108} SC, Stefansson Diary, 5 November 1920.
Island, Ellesmere, as well as the Mackenzie. The directors of the company took a dim view of such a scheme for they "felt that there was as yet a good [deal] to do to get the present enterprise going." Stefansson was not so much rash, perhaps, as he was somewhat naïve about the logistics of operating such ventures.

Once again, Stefansson sought to force the pace. On 21 December 1920, he applied to the government for another lease, similar to his Baffin Island one, for grazing privileges for reindeer at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. However this time he was unsuccessful. After "careful consideration...it has been decided that at the present time it is not considered advisable to grant any further concession of this nature," the Canadian government was not willing to undertake such a scheme, because the recommendation of the Musk-Ox Commission, tabled in September, 1920, had urged caution and careful preparation prior to government support for grandiose reindeer industries in the North.

Stefansson convinced the directors of the Hudson’s Bay Reindeer Company corporation to approach the Quebec government for a lease to an area of northern Quebec, north of the parallel of Fort Chimo, in the "general vicinity" of the Baffin Island project. As he explained to H. Mercier, Minister of Land and Forests for the Province of Quebec:

109 SC, HBRC, John Hughes [secretary-treasurer of the Hudson’s Bay Reindeer Company], 6 January 1921.

While we think that the climate of Baffin Island is in general suited for reindeer, we are not quite certain of it. We think that the climate of Northern Quebec is also suited for domestic reindeer but again we are not quite certain, but we feel sure that if one part of northern Canada is ill-suited another will be better suited and it is desired to make the experiments in two or three kinds of environment. While we do not anticipate absolute failure in any of our experiments, we think that for natural regions one region may prove to be much better than another.

...Baffin Land is entirely devoid of trees while trees are found well to the north in Quebec. We would, therefore, like to get a lease of such a geographical character that the reindeer can be kept in the open country in summer and driven to the woods in winter. This is the custom in northern Norway, and while we do not think the presence of wood necessary, we would like for safety sake to have an opportunity to try to develop the business in a country where we can retreat to the woods if that prove needful. 111

Stefansson, along with A.R. Holden of the Montreal law firm of Meredith, Holden, Haag, Shawnessay and Hewert, representing the interests of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company, met with J.A. Perrault, Quebec's Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, and with the Premier, L.A. Taschereau, to discuss the proposal. But Stefansson left the meeting exasperated, feeling that the provincial ministers were idiots and quite ignorant of what was being offered to them. 112 Perrault in particular, was very negative and "thinks there is a 'nigger in the woodpile'. I should judge he imagines that the Hudson's Bay Company has some ulterior design upon the furs or game

111 SC, HBRC, VS to H. Mercier, 20 July 1920,
112 SC, Stefansson Diary, [27 December 1920].
of the region in question, and that a real motive for applying for a grazing lease is something other than the cultivation of grazing animals." To be sure, the Hudson's Bay Company was not a Quebec favourite. At the Quebec City meeting Stefansson tried to improve the bargain for the Quebec government by suggesting that the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company should pay for any wild caribou incorporated into the reindeer herd, at a rate of about $25.00 a head. This in turn caused Fitzgerald to react in horror at Stefansson's temerity in offering, without authorization, to commit the fledgling company to additional cash outlays. All that Stefansson and Holden should secure after "a straightforward presentation of our case," Fitzgerald felt, was a lease similar to that already granted by the Federal government—nothing more. In any case the application was rejected, though Stefansson continued to hope that something might be effected.

---

113 SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald [Deputy Chairman, Hudson's Bay Company, Montreal], 27 December 1920; see also SC, HBRC, [Firm of] Meredith, Holden, Haag, Shawnessay, and Hewert to Fitzgerald, 21 April 1921.

114 ibid.


116 Stefansson was still trying, long after the Hudson's Bay Company and Directors of the company had given up hope, when it came time to ship the herd from Norway, there was some anxiety as to whether or not it might be necessary in an emergency to land the herd in Labrador. Stefansson thought that "there may be a silver lining to the cloud, for it may give us a chance again for a lease in northeastern Quebec..." I imagine that an actual shipment of reindeer to that part of the Ungava Peninsula which is under the control of Newfoundland may have some effect on the mental attitude of the Quebec Cabinet." SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 29 August 1921. Stefansson was always attempting to force the pace.
negotiations with Quebec were a minor matter which ultimately came to nothing, but they help assess some aspects of Stefansson's character and methods.

Stefansson had made certain general assumptions about northern Quebec when the requisite information, general and scientific, was actually lacking. The Quebec negotiations indicate that certain factors had never been seriously considered, namely the migratory habits of a herd accustomed to foraging in Norway. The Hudson's Bay Company knew this and Stefansson knew this too, yet the company was willing to take the word of a man who purported to be an authority on such matters, who had never visited Baffin Island himself.

The only first hand information Stefansson ever received about Baffin Island was from his old friend Storkerson, whom the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company had hired on Stefansson's recommendations. Storkerson seems to have had little experience with reindeer but was anxious to make a career of organized herding. His observations were certainly not scientific or detailed, and his trip to Baffin Island had a certain flavour of the optimistic, "get in quick" wildcatting of the pre-war years. Storkerson spent only one month assessing the flora and fauna and possible harbour sites of the area leased to Stefansson, an assessment which was only visual,

117 SC, HBRC, Storkerson to the Director of the Hudson's Bay Company, 9 November 1920,
for Storkerson had no training to undertake scientific investigation. The rash and hurried activities of Stefansson and his associate were in marked contrast to the deliberate operations of the Hudson’s Bay Company and other directors of its subsidiary. The land Storkerson considered "forbidding and rocky", but a good harbour might be found at Amadjuak Bay where, he speculated, it could probably remain ice free in the summer—because of a maze of outlying islands—until the deep winter. Storkerson and Stefansson—like many others at the time—held that a reindeer is a reindeer is a reindeer, and that lichens are lichens:

...There seemed to be an abundance of reindeer lichens growing on the face of the rock and the crevices and sheltered nooks so that from a distance of half a mile in places this mountainous land looked almost greenish-white on the dark background. Never before in any of the countries that I have travelled have I seen reindeer lichen in such profuse abundance on stoney ground...[Behind Amadjuak Bay] the vegetation is mainly reindeer lichens and grass. The grassland has the appearance of an ideal feeding ground fro[sic] caribou and reindeer and is only about a distance of twelve miles from the bottom of Amadjuak Bay and therefore easily accessible...Grasses, mosses, reindeer lichens, and flowers are abundant all over the parts visited by me, so much so that I formed the personal opinion that Baffin Island as regards vegetation is better qualified as reindeer country than northern Norway where reindeer have been raised for centuries.

Apparently this report delighted Stefansson, and the head office as well.

In January, 1921, Storkerson reported to the Hudson’s Bay in London, after which he was sent to Norway by Charles Sale to inquire into the purchase of reindeer stock, but

118 Ibid.
when it came to the actual work of buying the herd and recruiting herders, the Hudson's Bay Company authorized Francis Wood (who had worked with Grenfell) to undertake this task instead, while Storkerson was to take over operations once the herd had been landed in Baffin Land. The Hudson's Bay Company were probably convinced that neither Stefansson or Storkerson knew much about buying reindeer, and placed their trust in an experienced buyer instead. Although Storkerson might have been the "best man" to manage the herd—-and that is debatable—the Hudson's Bay Company was not ready to leave the purchasing to a man who had had no skill in that particular endeavour; the company was large, experienced in business, and considered such things should follow proper procedures. Storkerson's insistence that he control the entire field operation, including the purchase of the herd, was unacceptable to the venerable firm that was used to giving orders, not taking them, or letting a situation slip out of their grasp. In their view, indeed, Storkerson had "developed ideas too advanced regarding his duties...."

119 Storkerson saw Wood's appointment as undercutting his position; it was a "grave injury to me, for it casts reflection on my integrity, and capability to perform what I, in the first place, was engaged to [do]." 120 With that he

119 SC, HBRC, Fitzgerald to VS, 21 May 1921.

120 SC, HBRC, Storkerson to Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, 7 May 1921.
resigned because, he asserted, it had been "intended" that he should be in charge of the selection, buying, and transportation to Baffin Island of the herd, as well as manager of the station. 121 Unfortunately for Storkerson, these intentions were never made explicit by the Hudson's Bay Company, which had its own method of operation. Stefansson later agreed with the company's procedures regarding the buying and transfer of the herd. 122

Stefansson, who was half-way around the globe in California on a lecture tour, was stunned by the news of Storkerson's resignation. 123 He was too remote from the situation to do anything positive for Storkerson, and now he faced the prospect that the experiment on Baffin Island would be headed by strangers, not by Storkerson whom he trusted to look after his interests. He requested Fitzgerald to ask Storkerson to reconsider, 124 but the company was not too anxious, considering that such a person might cause trouble in the future, "[a]t[a] time when perhaps very difficult to rectify." 125 Thereupon, Stefansson turned to Storkerson with a plea to withdraw his resignation, but Storkerson would only

121 Ibid.
122 SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 22 June 1921.
123 SC, HBRC, Fitzgerald to VS [telegram], 17 May 1921.
124 SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald [telegram], 18 May 1921.
125 SC, HBRC, Fitzgerald to VS [telegram], 21 May 1921.
withdraw his resignation if he were given Wood's duties, and this the company refused to do; To Stefansson, Storkerson's departure was the single mistake from which stemmed all the subsequent troubles of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company—and what followed was a foregone conclusion: "The death knell of the Baffin Island Reindeer experiment was sounded, though we did not hear it at the time."\(^{126}\) It is difficult to agree with this conclusion, for the very nature of the enterprise and the assumption surrounding its success, spelled trouble, with or without Storkerson.

Stefansson had other worries besides. He sought the advice of Jafet Lindeberg in connection with the employment of Lapps on the Baffin Island project and, not being an expert himself, transmitted Lindeberg's knowledge to Fitzgerald of the Hudson's Bay Company: Norwegian and European Lapps were totally unsuited for the treeless regions of Baffin Island and would not know how to cope with this totally new environment. According to Stefansson, the only thing that saved Lindeberg when he was reindeer herder in Alaska was the presence of forested areas adjacent to the grazing regions.\(^{127}\) But how importing Laplanders with experience in Alaska would meet the needs of managing reindeer herds in treeless country is a puzzle. What Stefansson unwittingly implied was that no matter who was hired to look after the herds—Laplanders

\(^{126}\) Stefansson, *Discovery*, p. 124.

\(^{127}\) SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald [telegram], 7 June 1921.
imported directly from Europe or Laplanders with experience in Alaska—they would all face the same problem and have to improvise solutions for the winter migration of reindeer. Yet even though Baffin Island was essentially an unfortified country, Stefansson set great store in importing Laplanders who had been in Alaska; otherwise, "...I think we are riding for a fall in Baffinland."¹²⁸ This gloomy assessment, indeed, was correct in the long run, but his advice and arguments made no effective solutions for the problem.

The Hudson's Bay Company chose a man they considered to be an "experienced and competent leader," Ole Johnsen, telegraphing Stefansson that they and their newly-found replacement for Storkerson "fully appreciate difficulties due to absence [of] forests."¹²⁹

The stage was now set to begin operations. During the summer of 1921, 687 deer were purchased in Norway, and the services were secured of Johnsen and six Lapp families as herdsmen. While in quarantine, before loading on board the Nascopi, the herd was checked over and cleared by an expert pathologist, from the Canadian government, Dr. Watson. But by the time the Nascopi reached Bugten i Alten in September, 60 of the reindeer had died or were lost before loading aboard.

¹²⁸ SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 1 June 1921.
¹²⁹ SC, HBRC, Fitzgerald to VS [telegram], 2 July 1921.
A further 77 had perished on the journey across the Atlantic despite the numerous precautions taken for their physical comfort. 130

The arrival of the Nascoopi at Amadjuak Bay on 1 November 1921 was no signal for rejoicing either:

The country was covered with snow, and seemed to consist of nothing but rocks, cliffs, and stones. There was scarcely any signs of vegetation except for a little reindeer moss here and there.

On arrival it was found that by mistake a house had not been built to accommodate Captain Mikkelsborg, Ole Johnsen and his family. However, a small one roomed house belonging to the Reverend Doctor Fleming was utilized. It was in a derelict condition but it was made habitable.

...In spite of the endeavours of the herdsmen, the herd on landing commenced to scatter in all directions in search of food. Instructions were given to the Lapps to do their best to keep the herd together, but they report that they were unable to do so, because the animals would take no notice of the dogs. 131

The scattering of the unmanageable herd meant that they were at the mercy of the elements. By June, 1922, only 210 deer were left; by September of the same year only 180, including 11 new calves. 132

Steps were taken to look for better feeding grounds in the areas Storkerson had indicated as favourable, but the


131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.
herders and the station manager, Captain Mikkelborg, agreed that the better pastures were near the coast. All were very critical of Storkerson's report:

In the summer [of 1922] a journey was made to Mt. Mingo on exactly the same day that Mr. Storkerson travelled there two years before to make his report. Captain Mikkelborg was accompanied by one of the Lapps who was accustomed to herding reindeer in the hard north country. The pastures were found to be un favourable. Reindeer lichen were very scarce, and the scanty, boggy grass contained very little or no nutriment. The feeding grounds were only sufficient to provide for a small herd during the summer, and offered no chance for the animals laying in fat for the winter. 133

Storkerson, it was claimed, "not being conversant in the herding of reindeer," could not differentiate between the three types of moss on Baffin Island: Iceland moss, black moss and Elk moss. "In Baffinland the first two mosses are very scarce, particularly the Iceland moss. The Elk moss is more plentiful, but of this the reindeer only nibble the tops....The Caribou will live on it, but the reindeer will not consume it as food." 134 Not only could the herd not establish a proper balanced dietary routine because of this shortage of the right type of forage, but the forbidding climate took its toll: "In the summer they [the reindeer] may live, but in the winter it is worse, because the snow gets so hard that the reindeer are not able to break through to get at the food. When it gets really cold we cannot break through with a stick. It is as much as one may get through with an iron shovel." 135

133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., Report of Neilson Thrui.
Frank Melton, who succeeded Mikkelborg as post manager in September, 1922, concluded in his reports to the parent company that there was "no possibility of the venture ever developing into a profitable business in Baffin land," and he suggested that the remainder of the herd be moved to the east side of Hudson's Bay in the vicinity of Richmond Gulf in northern Quebec:

...from what I have learned of this country it [Richmond Gulf] appears to be ideal, both from herding and for transportation facilities, being within easy reach of any railway that may terminate in the Hudson's Bay, this itself would be a great advantage should the business ever reach a commercial stage, there is also timber, which if not suitable for building purposes, would be a great saving in fuel, which is one of our most expensive items in this country...whatever policy the reindeer company adopts, they should have a resident manager whose only duty is to look after their interests, superintend the herders, and be at all times within reach of the herd, it would also be far less expensive for them to have their own headquarters and stores, and not have parts of their business under the control of their fur trade department, if this was done, a small herd fenced, could be made almost self-supporting even in this country.136

A rather gloomy outlook for an industry that was supposed to achieve instant success, complete with packing, slaughtering and transportation facilities within two or three years. Such adverse reports concerning one of his pet projects made Stefansson livid. To him, all the difficulties experienced by Mikkelborg and his helpers "appeared to me merely as excuses

136 SC, HBRC, Frank Melton to Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, 13 July 1924.
one would expect from people unfamiliar with an Arctic climate to explain the results of their incompetence."  

137 True Baffinland was cold and stormy, but the temperatures, he was certain, were no worse, if not better than Manitoba. The whole fiasco to him underlined the folly of letting Storkerson go, for the "same gales that intimidated the Norwegians would have been to him no more than temptation to him to go out and enjoy the weather."  

138 Stefansson would not accept the alibi that the herd needed some sort of taiga to fall back on during the winter season; nor would he believe that the type of reindeer moss was unsuitable.  

139 He was ready to accept the food prejudices of men but not of reindeer. Sheer incompetence, timidity and the wrong sort of herders were at the bottom of the fiasco. Stefansson claimed that the Lapps employed in the enterprise were coast Lapps, unfamiliar with reindeer, who had been selected by a person to whom they owed quite a bit of money, "whose chief concern seemed to be to get as much of his debts as possible from the advances in salary paid by our company."  

140 Authorities, and Stefansson was not one of them, are not entirely in agreement as to which type of lichen was most

---

137 SC, HBRC, VS to Fitzgerald, 29 December 1922.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
140 SC, HBRC, VS to Sale, 4 May 1923.
prevalent in south west Baffin Island. The Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company report stated that the reindeer preferred the Icelandic type but found only an abundance of Elk moss which was not to their liking. According to Diamond Jenness, there was an abundance of Icelandic moss, but a scarcity of Cladonia rangiferina which would have had enough nourishment to sustain the beasts.\footnote{Diamond Jenness, \textit{Eskimo Administration: Canada}, Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper No. 14 (Montreal, 1964), p. 27. This same observation was made by J. Mikkelborg, \textit{"Reindeer from Lapland"}, \textit{The Bay} (1949-50), pp. 22-7, 37-9, 16-18, 25, 28, 30, 12-16.} Another more recent work suggests that during winter forage, reindeer will eat all three, all of which are deficient in nutritive value,\footnote{R.M. Hill, \textit{Mackenzie Reindeer Operations}, Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, publication no. 67-1, (Ottawa, 1967), pp. 53-56.} and rely mainly on the products available in summer foraging to sustain themselves through the winter. But Baffin Island could in no way offer such summer foraging.

It was unfortunate perhaps that the animals were landed in November after an exhausting trip across the Atlantic, for no one can tell just how much wear and tear was inflicted upon the animals who in all likelihood could not store up enough food within themselves to meet the rigours of winter. What they may have needed most—and this is speculation—was an initial food supply nutritious enough to regenerate their wintering abilities. Instead, faced with the
hard snow and the type of food available, many died of starvation. The divergent views even as to the species of lichen present in the area underscores Stefansson's lack of accurate knowledge about the flora of Baffin Island and the foraging habits of the reindeer on which to base a commercial operation. As late as 1967, the Canadian government's report, *Mackenzie Reindeer Operations*, acknowledged the need for more research on the relationship between the delicate physiological makeup of the reindeer and their environment, and to ascertain the level of utilization of tundra vegetation in the care and feeding of such animals. 143

To all intents and purposes, the experiment on Baffin Island was over after the first year. The herd had either been decimated by starvation or had run off with the wild caribou, and only one-third still survived. The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company turned down Stefansson's reminder that the company should live up to the terms of the lease and land 1000 reindeer by 1 November 1924, and it rejected his suggestion that he approach the Minister of Interior in Ottawa to secure an extension of the lease stipulation. 144

By now Stefansson was fighting a losing battle against a company which had been burned and refused to risk similar


treatment until it was certain about the premises of any future enterprise. While the Hudson's Bay Company remained tolerant of Stefansson personally, it was very cool in rejecting his proposals for salvaging the project. By late 1925, all capital invested in the reindeer company having been lost, in addition to several sums advanced to the company to keep it from sinking, the value of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company shares had fallen to zero.  

A year later Stefansson was asked to surrender his shares in the defunct company to enable its affairs to be wound up; it appears that the old company wished to use the organization and machinery of the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company to establish "further experiments in districts bordering Hudson's Bay." Stefansson relinquished his shares, while expressing the hope that if the new scheme were successful he might be associated with it.

The scheme was finished, and Stefansson's reputation as an expert on Arctic development took another slide downhill in public and professional circles, though Stefansson disclaimed responsibility for the failure. He continued to believe that if Storkerson had been allowed to manage the

145 SC, HBRC, Sale to VS, 5 November 1925.
146 SC, HBRC, Sale to VS, 30 November 1926.
147 SC, HBRC, VS to Sale, 12 March 1927.
herd the project would not have failed, although long afterwards he was also prepared to concede that Storkerson had probably "misjudged the character of the vegetation on the Baffin Island range."\textsuperscript{148} It is doubtful, however, whether the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company would have succeeded even in a limited fashion if Storkerson had been the range manager, for there was too much working against the fledgling company. The selection of Baffin Island was a mistake, and this made all the other choices, such as the selection of the manager and Lapp herders, ineffective. While Stefansson only acknowledged late in life that the selection of the Baffin Island range had been an error,\textsuperscript{149} the Hudson's Bay Company reached that conclusion much earlier, in fact by 1926: "Whilst failure may have been the result of several causes, we were certainly unfortunate in the selection of the grazing lands, and that error made success impossible."\textsuperscript{150}

Who was to blame? Storkerson bore some share of the responsibility for though he was not a trained botanist, his reports were coloured to please his principals--for on them hung his chances of a future livelihood. What the project needed most was an independent expert associated neither with Stefansson nor the Hudson's Bay Company.

\textsuperscript{148}Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, p. 268.

\textsuperscript{149}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{150}SC, HBRC, Sale to VS, 30 November 1926.
Stefansson, himself, was certainly no expert on reindeer or the Eastern Arctic, nor was he, even worse, employing scientific principles in this matter. He may have been logical in his use of the existing yet woefully incomplete information, but he was not scientific in checking its accuracy for himself. No one had bothered, as they have done since the establishment of reindeer herds in northern Canada under government auspices to study vegetation and reindeer from a detailed, scientific point of view. Stefansson knew he was groping in the dark when he wavered over the effect of a treeless region on the migratory and foraging habits of a species used to certain patterns of existence; and when he attempted to secure a portion of northern Quebec, another area with which he was totally unfamiliar, as were most of his contemporaries. In some subjects in which he became very active both financially and publicly he was more promoter and popularizer than expert scientist:

I [T. Clifford] don't think there is any doubt that the failure of this enterprise must be attributed in large measure to inadequate study and preparation.

Our main concern in regard to reindeer is to develop herding as a native industry suitable to the conditions which prevail in the territories. Information from other countries is interesting and sometimes helpful but nothing takes the place of actual experience and persistent effort to find out what can be done without any extravagant forecasts. We are gradually accumulating data based on facts, the problems involved are becoming clearer. These are receiving constant study.

Dr. Stefansson seems to have a wide fund of fact
and fable about the northern regions of the world....However, it is not possible for one in his position to come to grips with the administrative difficulties in carrying forward northern projects and for this reason his views tend to be rather broad and sweeping.151

* * *

Stefansson's successful return from the Arctic had signalled a new round in his Canadian career. After his near-fatal bout with typhoid fever, pneumonia and pleurisy in 1918, he may have felt that his exploring life was all but over, despite earlier intentions to return to the North. Once he left the North, no longer was he content with exploring and writing about his experiences. In his own words, Stefansson wanted to become "Salesman for the North,"152 but not solely to make money for himself, though this was a concern. He also had a "northern vision" and it is quite impossible to discern where Stefansson's eagerness for monetary reward ended and his idealism began. Given Stefansson's penchant for seeking greatness, one suspects that he was certain financial gain would automatically follow on the heels of the success of his concepts.

151 Files of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [hereafter DIAND], Ottawa, 20-Stefansson file, vol. 2, T. Clifford to Mr. Cumming [Bureau of the North-west Territories and Yukon Affairs], 28 May 1947.

152 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 229.
Stefansson realized that to be listened to he would have to prove the validity of his hypothesis, through practical application. Initially he and his ideas were acceptable in the highest circles, for he carefully cultivated the "right" people in Canada, the United States and Great Britain who shared his optimism and admired his prowess. Stefansson's influence in Ottawa, added to his ability to interest and prod important people, had led to the appointment of the Royal Commission on Reindeer and Musk-Ox, and later to the granting of a lease to southern Baffin Island. But the Commission's pace had been too slow; Stefansson considered he could force the pace of the Canadian government by parading before them a successful enterprise, the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company. He was sadly mistaken in this, however, for the company began to crumble almost as soon as it began operations.

Stefansson seemed to have a naive, mysterious inner faith that despite obvious difficulties and lack of planning, once the project was off the ground, improvisation could take care of the details, or the details could take care of themselves. From his point of view the situation was so logical that everything was bound to have a rational solution. In a sense, this had also been his approach to the Canadian Arctic Expedition. The reindeer concept was bold, and perhaps economically sound for the natives, if the homework had been done; but under the circumstances of 1920-21 it was too

rash and impractical. Perhaps the strangest aspect of the case is that this rashness was also displayed—even though momentarily—by the Hudson's Bay Company which traditionally was plodding and extremely careful in embarking on new projects. Why they accepted Stefansson's point of view—after showing initial reluctance to jump in immediately—will only be made perfectly clear when their archives for the period are opened. But after World War I, the Hudson's Bay Company was in serious financial straits and hoped to catch on to any enterprise which held possibilities for success. Stefansson's project had that aura. One can assume, however, that Stefansson's forceful personality, his conviction, the plausibility of the plan, his world reputation and influence in high quarters in Ottawa and, to a degree, in the United States and Great Britain, impressed a company which was continually trying diversify its interests.

Such was the story of a failure which helped dislodge Stefansson from his pinnacles of influence with business and governments won by his successful explorations. The Wrangel Island episode was even more important in undermining his political power because it embarrassed and alienated not merely a "respectable" firm as the Hudson's Bay Company but the Government of Canada as well. If anything, the Wrangel Island episode spelled the end for Vilhjalmur Stefansson's influence in official Canada.
CHAPTER IX

STEFANSSON AND WRANGEL ISLAND

Like the reindeer and musk-ox project, the Wrangel Island episode of 1921-24, would reveal a similar pattern of action and assumptions on the part of Stefansson. The affair was another phase, probably the most vital, in Stefansson's Canadian career. This time, however, he would step on the world stage and involve Canada in an international poker game which might have occasioned a reversal of efforts to consolidate the Arctic archipelago. Canada's assumption of authority over the archipelago was threatened by Stefansson's actions—hypothetically at least—and the Dominion was involved briefly in an unpleasant international incident at a time when its government was anxious to gain recognition from the world community.

---

1 This chapter is a revised version of the present writer's article, "Wrangling Over Wrangel Island," Canadian Historical Review, XLVIII (September, 1967), pp. 201-226.
The "adventure" would reveal Stefansson at his best in terms of persuading, and for a time, manipulating Canadian and British officialdom. This was the period of his most intimate relationship with politicians, bureaucrats, and statesmen. His manoeuvres to achieve concealed personal ends would visibly upset Canadian politicians and bureaucrats, until the resourcefulness of Mackenzie King saved the day. The repercussions would be felt by all, but especially by Stefansson whose career in Canadian officialdom was brought to an abrupt end.

As far as is known, Wrangel Island, lying 110 miles due north of Siberia, was discovered in 1849 by Captain Kellett, an Englishman, and for many years bore the name of Kellett Land. Less than twenty years later, in 1867, an American, Thomas Long, sailed close by in the whaling bark Nile. Long did not know that the island had been discovered by Kellett and placed upon Admiralty charts. Supposing it to be a discovery of his own, he suggested it be called Wrangel Island in honour of Baron Wrangel, then governor of Russian Alaska.

---

2 The most extensive treatment of the subject can be found in Stefansson's, The Adventure of Wrangel Island (New York, 1925). Also a chapter on this subject can be found in Stefansson's autobiography, Discovery, but his account remained substantially unaltered.

3 These highlights concerning details of the discovery and sighting follow closely Stefansson, Adventure, pp. 15-26,
In his early career Wrangel, on behalf of the Russian government, had conducted explorations by sledge northward over the frozen ocean from the mouth of the Kolyma River. These futile expeditions, spanning the years 1822 to 1824, were in response to rumours that a land mass existed beyond the mainland. Captain Long, familiar with Wrangel's unsuccessful efforts, felt that it would be appropriate to name the island in the baron's honour.

The first official landing on the island was made by Captain Calvin Hooper of the United States revenue cutter Corwin in August 1881. At this time Hooper raised the American flag, deposited a record of his brief stay, and claimed the island for the United States. Despite a second and longer visit to the island within a few days of the Corwin, by another American revenue cutter, Rodgers, nothing was done to cement the claim. The island remained derelict until 1911 when a hydrographic party from the Russian ice-breakers Taimuir and Vaigatch erected a navigation beacon on the southwest portion of the island. Finally, in 1914, the crew of the wrecked Karluk of the Canadian Arctic Expedition eked out an existence on Wrangel Island for six months, eventually running up the Union Jack (1 July 1914) and supposedly claiming the island for Canada and the British Empire.

Although the notion that the island had been formally claimed for Canada was encouraged by Stefansson, to suit his

\[3\text{E.g. Stefansson, Adventure, pp. 25, 60.}\]
purposes, it seems very unlikely that anything of an official nature had been done. Contemporary evidence, including photographs and their identification, show that the raising of the flag in 1914 had nothing to do with a formal claim; the celebration of Dominion Day had been the occasion. For example, on the reverse side of a photograph, showing the Union Jack waving over Wrangel Island, appears the following inscription: "The celebration of Dominion Day [1 July 1914] at Roger's Harbour, Wrangel Island."  

4 William L. McKinlay, one of the Karluk's marooned crew, wrote on that day, "... nothing much doing today. Very warm."  

5 That day then, was not as auspicious as was later made out to be. Moreover, Bartlett, the captain of the Karluk, categorically denied that the flag raising was intended to take possession of the Wrangel Island; at no time did he report to the Canadian government, orally or in writing, that the island had been claimed for Canada.  

Although Stefansson was commander of the Expedition to which the Karluk was attached, he had not been part of the shipwrecked party, for the vessel, a prisoner of the ice, had

4 PAC, RG42, 84-2-54.

5 PAC, MG30/19, McKinlay Diary, 1 July 1914.

drifted away while he was absent on a journey to the mainland. What must be remembered is that Stefansson received his knowledge of the island as second-hand, after many an informal talk with Jack Hadley, a survivor of the disaster. Hadley painted a rosy picture for his commander, outlining the strategic and, especially, the commercial prospects of the island.

Yet, an unresolved mystery still surrounds Hadley's report, for it appears that Hadley either had misled Stefansson, or that Stefansson grossly exaggerated Hadley's opinions in using them as a reliable eye-witness "source." Certainly, Hadley's opinions of Wrangel Island, as quoted by Stefansson, did not coincide with his views during his stay there in 1914, or what was later learned about the conditions and features of the island. The island Hadley saw then (and described in his Diary for July-August 1914) was certainly not the paradise his commander later claimed Hadley had told him about and published in The Adventure of Wrangel Island. In fact, the provenance of that Hadley "Manuscript" appears suspect for a number of reasons. The English used in the account was certainly not typical of a man who, for all intents and purposes, was practically illiterate. Moreover,


8Compare with, PAC, RG42, 84-2-46, Hadley Diary, 12 March 1914, 7 September 1914.
the published account only appeared a year after Hadley's death,\(^9\) though Hadley might have dictated some observations to Stefansson. No one, save Stefansson who vouched for its authenticity, has ever seen the original manuscript of Hadley's recollections. Stefansson, in *The Adventure of Wrangel Island* has stated that the original hand-written manuscript was in the archives at Ottawa,\(^10\) but despite a careful search in 1925 no officer of the Naval Service could find it, and the deputy minister was not even willing to put much faith in its existence.\(^11\)

And there the matter rested. If Hadley, indeed, made the statements attributed to him, he deliberately and maliciously misled Stefansson,\(^12\) to stay in his commander's good graces. Stefansson then may have been hoodwinked by Hadley's glowing remarks. Or could Stefansson have made the whole thing up?

In any case, the apparently resource-filled island fitted into Stefansson's concept of what his Arctic should be: a polar Mediterranean from which Canada and the British Empire would derive renewed economic and strategic vigour.

---

\(^9\)PAC, RG42, 84-2-46, J.T. Crawford [father of Allan Crawford], to A. Johnston, Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 10 December 1925.

\(^10\)Stefansson, *Adventure*, p. 32.

\(^11\)PAC, RG42, 84-2-46, S. Johnston to J.T. Crawford, 6 August 1925.

\(^12\)Two of Hadley's Karluk associates stated that Hadley had little use for Stefansson. PAC, RG42, 84-2-46, William L. McKinlay [engineer on Karluk, 1913-14] to Mrs. Crawford, 3 November 1925; RMA/5, Bartlett to Anderson, 6 February 1922.
The world's centre of activity would drift northward from the more temperate latitudes toward the pole. The northward course of empire was now being applied in a strategic sense.  

Aiding him powerfully (as he was well aware) was the international situation in the north Pacific: the victorious Allies and the United States were bent on checking the emergent, militant Soviet State, and the Americans distrusted Japan's intentions in the Pacific and in Siberia. Stefansson reasoned that it would be in the best interests of Britain, the empire, and the United States to secure Wrangel Island and that these countries would welcome such a move.

Accordingly, Stefansson made tentative approaches to the Canadian government in 1919, apparently with the blessing of Sir Robert Borden, though it was not until the fall of 1920 that he began his campaign in earnest. In September and October of that year he approached the new Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen, and a number of high-ranking individuals in the Canadian government: Loring Christie, legal adviser of the Department of External Affairs and one of the most influential policy-makers in the Meighen government, W.W. Cory, Deputy


14 Stefansson, Discovery, p. 231. See also, PAC, Meighen Papers, Borden to Meighen, 3 November, 11 January 1921.
Minister of the Department of the Interior, and J.B. Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks and an expert on polar problems. Stefansson scoffed at Canada's complacent reliance upon the sector theory, first enunciated by Senator Poirier in 1907, for "it is no more inevitable that every land north of Alaska should belong to Alaska than it is that a strip of coast from Skagway to the vicinity of Prince Rupert shall belong to us, which it does not." Such a theory would only serve to bar Canada from enjoying freedom of movement in the Arctic. Once such a nonsensical notion as the sector theory were dropped Canada would be free to acquire valuable islands such as Wrangel. As for Wrangel, it should be British territory because during the next great war and, indeed, in the course of peaceable development of the next two or three decades, there will be traffic across the polar basin from Europe to Japan, by way of the polar ocean, certainly with dirigibles and submarines and probably aeroplanes. This distance from England to Japan [sic] by a great circle drawn through the polar ocean is not much more than a third as great as the distance from England to Japan by way of Montreal and Vancouver. The perpetual daylight of summer will not only make this route feasible in time of war but also advantageous in times of peace. As naval bases for our submarines and as way stations for aircraft we need a chain of islands across the polar basin.

15Canada, Senate Debates, 20 February 1907, pp. 266-73.


17PAC, RG15, A2, vol. 2, Department of the Interior, Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch, Miscellaneous Records, VS to J.B. Harkin, 7 February 1921.
Map E: STEFANSSON'S ARCTIC MEDITERRANEAN AIR ROUTES.

*From, Stefansson, The Northward Course of Empire, p. 274.
To Stefansson's way of thinking, Wrangel Island also offered a stepping stone to the undiscovered riches that the polar basin had to offer. Only one problem remained—formal possession.\textsuperscript{18} Even the raising of the British flag in 1914 and six months' occupation by the Karluk's crew were insufficient since that claim had lapsed in 1919,\textsuperscript{19} according to Stefansson's interpretation of existing international law. The only way the claim could be safeguarded was by continuous occupation. If Canada were to follow up original discovery by exploration, and especially by commercial development "such as the placing of a Hudson's Bay Company post...or other trading enterprise," she would then have the best claim to the island.\textsuperscript{20} But, if Canada remained inactive, others would occupy Wrangel Island.

\textsuperscript{18}SC, Wrangel Island-1920 file, VS to W.W. Cory, 30 October 1920.

\textsuperscript{19}PAC, MG, 26, J1, Mackenzie King Papers, vol. 86, fol. 9277, VS to Mackenzie King, 11 March 1922. It remains unclear as to how Stefansson arrived at this concept of a five year "time limit" regarding unofficial territorial claims. Stefansson had appeared as a witness before the Technical Advisory Board on northern islands on November 20, 1920. There he told the board of Knud Rasmussen's and presumably the Danish government's attitude toward Canada's claim to Ellesmere Island. From a reading of the minutes of that November meeting it becomes quite obvious that Canadian officials were apprehensive about Canadian claims in the Arctic and that they, too, were working under some sort of "time-limit" assumption. Basing their report on Oppenheim's \textit{Treatise on International Law}, they recommended that Canada immediately take measures--in the form of additional expeditions, and what eventually became the annual Eastern Arctic Patrols of the R.C.M.P.--to secure the eastern portion of the Arctic. PAC, Harkin Papers, RG15/A-2, "Memo. Re: Northern Islands. Prepared for Information Technical Advisory Board Meeting, November 10, 1920." See also pp. 370, 376-77.

\textsuperscript{20}SC, Noice Correspondence, 1923-26, VS to Christie, 25 September 1920.
To add a sense of urgency to his pleas—which he found helpful in securing desired actions from others—Stefansson alluded to various newspaper reports, eventually confirmed by the Soviet representative in New York, that the U.S.S.R. had leased the northeastern corner of Siberia to a syndicate of American capitalists, presumably the Liebes trading company of San Francisco. To Stefansson, the leasing of an area immediately south of Wrangel Island was an implicit threat to Canadian pretensions there, because such a firm could well occupy the island as part of their lease. Moreover, in the long run the granting of such a lease would strengthen the claim of the grantor, in this case the U.S.S.R., as demonstrating its sovereign authority.

To Arthur Meighen, who was already impressed by many of Stefansson's ideas, he argued that Canada was faced by two strategic problems in the North—Ellesmere Island and Wrangel Island. Because of the prevailing attitude of Denmark it would be sufficient for Canada merely to "assert its claim to Ellesmere Island openly and decisively." The most pressing single polar problem of Canada, in his opinion, was Wrangel Island—a solution for which, he suggested, could be an

---


22 See pp. 306-07.
exploratory expedition led by himself.  

From the beginning, however, the Canadian government, by now becoming wary of Stefansson's tactics, exhibited reluctance to follow up the proposal, and the wheels of government were to turn slowly for Vilhjalmur Stefansson. As early as 25 November 1920, Sir Joseph Pope, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, advised Meighen against taking any action. Pope indicated that the tenuous Canadian claim rested upon the fact that Wrangel had been sighted by an Englishman who had never landed there. He disregarded the action of *Karluk's* crew in 1914 on the simple grounds that they had had no authority to claim the island. Though Stefansson was insisting that the gesture had been valid and binding, his instructions in 1913 had only authorized the Expedition "to take possession of and annex to His Majesty's Dominions any lands lying to the north of Canadian territory which are not within the jurisdiction of any civilized power," and in no way could "north" be interpreted to include Wrangel Island. Pope, in fact, concluded that the island in question was "not even in the Western Hemisphere, as the 180th median of longitude falls upon it. Essentially, it is an Asiatic Island." He drove home his department's verdict by reminding the

23 *PAC, Meighen Papers, vol. 13, file 7, fol. 007393-95, VS to Meighen, 30 October 1920.*


government that any claims Canada might have to the island were of an unsubstantial character, "and could only result in weakening our legitimate claims to the Arctic islands contiguous to our own territory...."  

Still the government dallied and these strong warnings went by the board. On February 19, 1921, Meighen conveyed the following message to Stefansson: "I have discussed the matters which you laid before me today and desire to advise you that the government proposes to assert the right of Canada to Wrangel Island, based upon the discovery and exploration of your expedition."  

According to Stefansson's account of the episode, these "matters" of which he had apprized Meighen were reports that Mr. Angus Brabant, the fur trade commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company, "had a strong inclination to put a post on Wrangel Island," but had postponed any action because the company did not feel sure the island was British territory. Stefansson conveniently and tactfully brought this state of affairs to Meighen's notice; the Prime Minister presented the Hudson's Bay Company's problem before a meeting of the cabinet which, within a matter of hours, arrived at the decision to

---


push ahead with the Canadian claim to Wrangel.  

Armed with such assurances Stefansson next set out to enlist the official support of the Hudson's Bay Company in London. Prior to this he had tried through his position within the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company to expand its operations to Wrangel Island, but had been discouraged by them.  

Now he returned with a seemingly powerful gambit—the blessing of the Canadian government. Mentioning that Brabant had been enthusiastic about the idea of a post on Wrangel Island, Stefansson thought it wise to remind the company of the interest displayed by its competitors. Now that the war was over its chief rival in the western Arctic, N. Liebes and Company of San Francisco, was bound to revive plans to place a post on Wrangel Island, or if not Liebes, then some other trading concern. Stefansson confided that the Canadian Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior were fully cognizant of the danger. In fact, they agreed it would not be proper for them to ask the Hudson's Bay Company to establish the post, but they welcomed such action by the company "for their plans for making secure the claim of Canada to the island would be materially helped if a British concern were to start a post there in the summer of 1921, and would look with the greatest favour of your doing so." 

---

28 SC, WIMF, VS to C.V. Sale, 23 February 1921.


30 SC, WIMF, VS to C.V. Sale, 23 February 1921.
more or less prodded the government into making a pronounce-
ment by means of the company, Stefansson was now using the
government's position to proselytize the parent company.

The company, interested in expanding its fur-producing
territory at first reacted favourably. But this was of little
consequence for within ten days Meighen executed an about-face
and Stefansson's plans had come to naught. On 1 March 1921,
Meighen curtly informed the explorer that the government's
approval had been withdrawn, and that its previous position
should be disregarded. On the preceding day an annoyed
Department of External Affairs had prompted Meighen to squelch
the project. Loring Christie, slighted because of the admin-
istration's disregard of his department's conviction that the
disadvantages far outweighed any possible advantages, Christie
took Stefansson's arguments severely to task, reminding Meighen
that Wrangel's commercial value was purely "speculative" and
based solely on Stefansson's assessment. Besides, Stefansson's
arguments based upon the Hudson's Bay Company need could be

---

31 LeBourdaïs, p. 160. The Hudson's Bay Company decided
at this point that it would establish a post on Wrangel Island,
SC, 1920-26 file, Sale to VS, 11 April 1921. Their enthusiasm
cooled, though, when they lost confidence in Stefansson and
his Baffin Island venture. First the company postponed any
action regarding Wrangel Island and eventually they abandoned
the idea. SC, WIMF, T.W, Sterling for Hudson's Bay Company
to VS, 23 July 1923.

32 PAC, Meighen Papers, vol. 13, file 7, fol. 007419,
Meighen to VS, 1 March 1921.
set aside because trading concerns such as the Hudson's Bay Company could secure fair commercial privileges even if the island were occupied by another power. Furthermore, Christie attached no strategic or military importance to the island and was quite willing for either Japan or Russia to acquire it. 33 Faced by the conflicting advice of the explorer Stefansson on the one hand, and of his civil servants Pope and Christie on the other, Meighen yielded to his official counsellors. In effect, cooler heads had prevailed and Stefansson's hopes that the Canadian government would underwrite his project had been thwarted.

The Department of External Affairs and its attitude were not solely responsible for scuttling Stefansson's project. Stefansson had raised strong personal doubts and hostilities to himself there early in the game as a result of the 1913-18 expedition. His forceful methods, which they regarded as impudence, 34 his reputed publicity-seeking, and his unpredictability inspired resentment on the part of important officials in government. Even Harkin, whom Stefansson later acknowledged as a strong supporter of his cause, 35 had severe misgivings about the explorer. On 2 March, the day after Meighen's note,


34 See p. 375.

35 Stefansson, Adventure, p. 78.
Harkin advised his superior that, since Stefansson was "an exceedingly difficult man to handle," the Department of Interior should guard against antagonizing him at all costs and make every effort to humour him.\(^{36}\) He even suggested it would be expedient to inform Stefansson that he was the prime candidate to command a secret expedition currently being planned as a means of asserting Canada's sovereignty over the northern archipelago.\(^{37}\) Stefansson had been lobbying for this appointment since his return in 1918, and this prize might appease him over the frustration of his hopes for Wrangel Island. In fact, the rumoured appointment could be used to retain Stefansson's friendship until this expedition was under way, then he should be sent North "as soon as possible where he would not be able to damage the Canadian cause."\(^{38}\)

Actually, the government, still anxious to continue its programme of polar exploration, was proposing to place the expedition either under Stefansson or under the British polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton. Harkin's fears as to Stefansson's reactions are an eloquent commentary on the attitude that even a sympathetic member of the administration held towards Stefansson:

\(^{36}\) PAC, RG15, A2, vol. 1, J.B. Harkin to W.W. Cory, 2 March 1921.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.
There is a grave probability that if any aid or recognition is given the Shackleton expedition either (or both) the United States and Denmark may receive advance information from Stefansson ... because Shackleton proposes to explore the identical regions that Stefansson also proposes to explore. Stefansson was the first person to specifically call attention to the weakness of Canada's claim to the Northern Islands. No one else is more familiar with the weakness of our case. He is aware of Canada's plan for remedying that weakness. He therefore is in a position to ruin the Canadian scheme by tipping off the facts to the United States, or Denmark, or in fact any other country that might have ambitions to acquire new territory. Stefansson is a Canadian in the sense that he was born in Canada but that is all. It would therefore be unwise to bank on his Canadian loyalty too much. The Canadian expedition has been developed in the line of keeping him with us through self-interest. 39

Plainly, while Ottawa was formally being indulgent towards Stefansson, nothing he could say or do could allay the deep mistrust of him exhibited behind his back.

So unsure was Ottawa of entrusting another expedition to Stefansson, and so apprehensive was the government about giving the command to Shackleton instead, that the cabinet split on the question, and the only solution was to cancel the expedition outright. The details of this secret expedition remained a mystery. Stefansson claimed that Shackleton, anxious to do polar exploration, had double-crossed him by spreading false rumours that the commander of the 1913-18 foray was no longer interested in exploration. At one point even Desbarats' superior, the Minister of the Naval Service, was supporting Stefansson's rival, and Stefansson had to look to Meighen to

39 Ibid.
carry on his fight in the cabinet. But the resistance was too strong and the only solution to this predicament was to do nothing. 40 Shackleton claimed the government had made an early promise to him, 41 but Meighen had dodged this by advising the British explorer that he, the Prime Minister, had been advised Shackleton could not make the necessary preparations in time. 42 This, however, was untrue, for Shackleton had men and a ship ready to go. 43 Shackleton, even if he had been trying to outmanoeuvre Stefansson, was shabbily treated by the Canadian government—or at least by Meighen.

But Stefansson was not the sort of man to be checked even by government. Thwarted in his first plan, he secretly set about securing Wrangel Island as a private enterprise in hopes of forcing the Canadian government into accepting what he considered to be its responsibility. To achieve these ends a seemingly harmless Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, a Canadian company, obtained incorporation on

40 Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 237-240.

41 PAC, Meighen Papers, Shackleton to Meighen, 6 May 1921.

42 PAC, Meighen Papers, Meighen to Shackleton, 9 May 1921.

43 PAC, Meighen Papers, Shackleton to Meighen, 12 May 1921.
23 June 1921. Stefansson had raised some money and enlisted four young men as his agents—Allan Crawford, a University of Toronto student and son of a professor there, and three eager, devoted, and experienced Americans—to carry out the company's prime objective, the occupation of Wrangel Island. Crawford, the Canadian, was chosen as the nominal leader of the expedition because Stefansson was afraid the undertaking would not be considered British unless a British subject were at the helm.44 Later, when the time came to apply for government backing, Stefansson was to assert that patriotism and the Empire were always uppermost in his mind,45 that his mission was to show the Canadian government the error of its ways. Charges that he hoped to acquire a lease to the island with a view to subletting it (as with Baffin Island) were unfounded, he asserted. His development company was, in effect, a front "to camouflage our real plans." He had talked of commercial development only to allay suspicions.46

This, however, was not the whole truth. To all intents and purposes Stefansson had given up the life of an active explorer. The Canadian government had dashed his hopes

44 Stefansson, Adventure, p. 77.


46 Stefansson, Adventure, p. 88; cf. SC, WIMF, VS to O.S. Finnie, 16 March 1923.
of leading another expedition. Since Stefansson's income now was largely derived from public lectures and from royalties from his books, and because his Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company was faring poorly, it was not surprising that he should have been thinking in terms of a good investment for the future. Indeed, to his good and trusted friend, Orville Wright, he later speculated that he could "sublet the island to some fur company for enough to get a handsome annual return on the money so far invested."\textsuperscript{47} Stefansson wanted a greater share of profits than from the reindeer scheme. As he told a close friend, F. Paysant, the Hudson's Bay Company had allotted him only a few shares in the Reindeer Company; his concern, aside from the Imperial considerations, was "of profiting personally" rather than see the profit go to the Hudson's Bay Company.\textsuperscript{48}

By occupying Wrangel Island with an unofficial party Stefansson was following out both his hopes for private gain and the best strategic plan for gaining official support for his enterprise. As he suggested to a correspondent at this time, the main idea in sending the men to Wrangel Island was to establish the fact of British, as well as Canadian, occupation of the territory; therein, he hoped he would be rewarded:

\textsuperscript{47} SC, Katherine Wright-1925 file, VS to Orville Wright, 24 August 1922.

\textsuperscript{48} SC, WIMF, VS to F. Paysant, 31 August 1921.
This would give me a chance to say to the British Government that but for my occupation of the island it might next year have fallen into the hands of either Japan or Russia and that they should, therefore in gratitude to me give me a lease on the island. I have no doubt this argument will work, for Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador, has already told me that it seems to him reasonable and that he knows the temper of the present British Government is such that they will be ready to recognize the validity of exactly that kind of argument.49

Stefansson was determined to secure the island for himself and his company, no matter what the circumstances. He transmitted private orders to Crawford on 15 August 1921, that the island should be claimed "in the name of King and Empire," as a continuation of the "right to the island already established by the Stefansson Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18."50 The flag raising, photos, and deposition of a record of the event, he warned Crawford, "should be done no matter if men of our or any other nations are already on the island."51 for Stefansson had to think of his business interests too.

Stefansson's junior partners fulfilled this task immediately after the Silver Wave deposited them on Wrangel Island on 16 September 1921. But in carrying out Stefansson's bidding Crawford was indiscreet. He raised the British flag in front of the predominantly American boat crew, who returned

49 SC, WIMF, VS to Dr. George Jennings, 30 August 1921.

50 SC, WIMF, VS to Crawford, 15 August 1922.

51 Ibid. Italics added.
to Nome charging they had been duped. During the winter of 1921-22 the grumblings of irate Alaskans to the American State Department reached the ears of the New York Times. Stefansson thereupon announced the news of the "adventure" in the New York paper before any other versions could cloud the issue. His report was soon followed by American press notices that an agitated State Department was planning to claim the island, but these remained only rumours. The entrepreneur remained confident, knowing his disciples had been safely in occupation of the island for the past six months. In effect, he was the master of Wrangel Island.

By this time the Canadian government had changed hands, Meighen having suffered defeat at the hands of Mackenzie King. For Stefansson here was a new opportunity, a new man to impress, another chance to gain official Canadian support. On 11 March 1922, just before the story broke in the New York Times, Stefansson wrote to Mackenzie King to emphasize "the need of adopting at once a definite policy towards the polar regions in general and in particular towards Wrangel Island."

He called King's attention to the fact that the latest maps issued by the Intelligence Division of the United States indicated that the northern boundary of Canada was at Lancaster 

---

52 Stefansson, Adventure, pp. 118-123.

53 PAC, King Papers, J1, vol. 86, fol. 69270, VS to Mackenzie King, 11 March 1922.
Sound and Barrow Strait, and that, by inference, the islands north of that did not belong to Canada. Even the islands that had been discovered by him were Canada's by right of discovery alone, but this was not enough. According to Stefansson's understanding of international law, Canada's claims to the northern archipelago would lapse by June 1922; the 1914 claim to Wrangel Island, he contended, had already lapsed in 1919. 54 He pleaded with the government to abandon its passive reliance upon sectoral claims and to begin a new and vigorous policy of actual occupation. To illustrate the necessity for actual occupation, Stefansson envisioned the probable fate of Wrangel Island had he not had the foresight to occupy it: "I take it for certain that had the Japanese moved in to Wrangel Island and had we then protested, an international court would have awarded the island to the Japanese in view of the fact that our claims had lapsed and we had shown no definite intention of confirming our rights by continuous occupation." 55 Fortunately, however, the Stefansson Arctic Development Company had saved the day. But now it was in dire straits, for it had acted privately and was at the mercy of the American State Department which might at any time intervene on behalf of the Alaskans whose interests his associates had challenged. The project needed the cloak of official protection — recognition

54 Ibid., fol. 69271. See pp. 356, 376-77.
55 Ibid. fol. 69274.
of the deed by the Canadian government.

Mackenzie King, new to his role as Prime Minister, was hardly in a position to give a forthright answer. He turned to more experienced heads for advice. What should he do? The venerable Sir Joseph Pope indicated that the views of his department remained unaltered; the quicker the administration dissociated itself from such a "far fetched claim" and such "fantastic pretensions", the better. 56

Nevertheless, King, along with the Minister and Deputy Minister of the Interior, Charles Stewart and W.W. Cory respectively, and the director of the Northwest Territories Branch, O.S. Finnie, met with Stefansson on May 2, 1922, and the conversations were sufficiently encouraging that on the following day Stefansson submitted a formal proposal regarding Wrangel Island. Making no mention of compensation or a cash settlement, he asked that an exclusive, long-term lease be granted to his company or to himself. 57 In view of this encouragement from such influential officials, coupled with the knowledge that a lease would be forthcoming within twenty-four hours after receipt of word from the government to go ahead, 58 Stefansson felt he was about to achieve his goal. To

56 PAC, King Papers, J4 [Wrangel Island File], Pope to Mackenzie King, 21 March 1922.


58 SC, WIMF, Alfred J.T. Taylor to VS, 26 June 1922.
all appearances the new Canadian government had reversed its predecessor's stand. Or was Ottawa playing the same old game until the issue could, in some way, be resolved without alienating Stefansson or jeopardizing the international situation?

In fact, the attitude of the Department of the Interior at this time was essentially the same as that of External Affairs and for basically the same reasons. All agreed that if and when the government gave the go-ahead they would not oppose the issuance of the lease, but that they considered such a development regrettable. Once the die was cast, however, the government would have to stand behind the act in every way. If such a contingency arose, the Department of the Interior claimed that it should "be provided with the funds sufficient to complete immediately its program for maintaining Canadian sovereignty in the north instead of spreading it over a number of years as is the present intention." Yet, like the Department of External Affairs, this department too was supremely confident that the present administration knew its true feelings and would never allow such a folly to transpire.

Then the impossible happened. During a debate on the Naval Service estimates, on 12 May 1922, Meighen, now leader of the opposition, questioned the government on its policy

59 DIAND, J.D. Craig to Hensley R. Holmden, 5 April 1923.

60 DIAND, Craig to Finnie, 10 May 1922; 9 April 1923,
toward Wrangel Island;

Mr. Meighen: Will the Ministers state what is the policy of the Government towards the Northern islands with particular reference to those covered by the Stefansson Expedition 1913-18, laid claim to on behalf of Canada, and to Wrangel Island.

Mr. Graham [Minister of Militia and Defence]: It is a delicate matter to state the policy of the Government on that question.

Mr. Meighen: Has the Government any policy?

Mr. Fielding [Minister of Finance]: What we have we hold.

Mr. Meighen: I would recommend the Government never to fall away from that principle.

Mr. Graham: Some People have failed to do that.

Mr. Meighen: The Government failed once, but I think if they had the same thing to do over again they would act differently.

Mr. Graham: The old Government.

Mr. Meighen: Yes, the old Government my Hon. friend was in. It is well known there is a dispute as to Wrangel Island. The question of the proper attitude of Canada towards the Island is doubtless before the Government. This vote has to do with these matters and I am asking if Government is in a position to say what its views are with relation to the retention of Wrangel Island or the continuance of Canada's claim thereto; and the same words apply to the other islands covered by the expedition.

Mr. Graham: The policy of the Government, as I understand it, is as just expressed by the Minister of Finance—what we have we hold.

Mr. Meighen: Well, have we Wrangel Island?

Mr. Graham: Yes, as I understand it, and we propose to retain it.

Mr. Fielding: We had it in December, and we have not let it go.

61 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 12 May 1922, p. 1751.
The fat was in the fire; the government had made its policy statement before the House of Commons. Whether King had anticipated such a turn of events is not clear, but he heaped coals upon the fire, for he was now forced to back his ministers and declare that "the Government certainly maintains the position that Wrangel Island is part of the Property of this country." By doing so, the government hoped to outmanoeuvre the opposition and to escape the charge that the Liberals had failed to uphold national and imperial interests. But the random remark was to leave responsible civil servants muttering incoherently--and Stefansson jumping for joy.

It seems reasonable to assume, however, that King did not mean what he had said in parliament, for his government took no action to give Stefansson his lease. Instead, Stefansson was kept at bay until King could extricate himself and his government. Yet King's statement had created an official position and Canadian policy began to encounter international opposition. On 15 July 1922, an embarrassed Colonial Office forwarded a note from the Soviet government agent in the United Kingdom to Governor General Byng. The Soviet note, dated 2 June, was obviously inspired by King's declaration. The Russian government appeared disturbed, intimating that Wrangel Island had been discovered by a Russian officer in the 1820's, that the Russian flag had been hoisted there when a hydrographic expedition (1910-15) had been sent out by the

\footnote{62}{Ibid.}
Russian admiralty, and that, in reality, there never had been any question but that Wrangel Island was a Russian possession. For its part, the Colonial Office expressed serious concern over the Canadian position and sought an explicit policy statement.

Mackenzie King was perturbed, not sure of himself or of the position his government should maintain. Recant, or follow through and fight—either course was politically explosive. King inquired anew "whether any action on his part was required and, if so, what step should be taken next." The Departments of External Affairs and the Interior made their intransigence known. Christie, sensing that the government's hand was being forced by an "impudent" adventurer, explained that his department's negative attitude was shared by others. The Department of Trade and Commerce had never supported the idea as economically feasible. As for the island's strategic possibilities, neither the Air Board nor the Naval Service Department, had, in his opinion, recommended the acquisition of the island. The naval strategists, like their colleagues in External Affairs, were aware of the changing power balance that was taking place in the Far East. To recognize Russia as owner of the island might contribute to the

---

63 PAC, King Papers, Wrangel Island File, Pope to Mackenzie King, 5 April 1923.

64 PAC, King Papers, Wrangel Island File, Christie to Mackenzie King, 9 August 1922.

65 Ibid.
restoration of the balance of power there, The United States would be denied the establishment of substantial influence and advantage in the Siberian region; at the same time Russian interest might be allowed to grow in the northwest Pacific to partially offset a truculent Japan. Christie could even foresee American support for Russia, but for different reasons. Washington, no doubt, would reason that if Canada acquired the island such action would enhance the British strategic position and, by association, that of its former ally, Japan. The United States might therefore feel pressed to prefer a claim. However, a hostile United States was the last thing Britain desired or Canada could afford, so "...the matter should be dropped altogether, and...the Government should decline to give either support or recognition to Mr. Stefansson's venture."

Meanwhile, T.L. Cory, legal adviser of the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior, also supported this opinion though he felt constrained to advise King that Canada's claim was in accordance with existing international law: "If, for example, colonists establishing themselves in an unappropriated country declare it to belong to the state of which they are members [,] a simple adoption of their act by the state is enough to complete its title, because by adoption the fact of possession and assertion of intention to possess, upon [which] the right of property by

Ibid.
occupation is grounded, are brought fully together." 67 This precept, Cory acknowledged, would give Canada its best claim to Wrangel Island. He went on, however, to emphasize the folly of pressing a Canadian claim and the possible disadvantages Canada and the Empire would derive from its acquisition. By claiming the island Canada would anger the United States which, most likely, would "rush a party into the Arctic and settle on some of our Northern Islands in retaliation" before Canada could strengthen her tenuous hold upon the Arctic archipelago.

King returned Cory's memorandum without comment, ignored the British query, and proceeded naively to advance a worried Stefansson $3,000 solely for the relief of his expedition, without any idea of giving formal support to the enterprise. 68 Stefansson, apprehensive about the condition of his party on Wrangel Island, had petitioned the King administration for $5,000 to cover the chartering of a ship and supplies. His own money and credit exhausted, he hoped to secure an advance, "details of repayment, etc., to be settled later." 69 The government was banking on the probability that Stefansson, who had sunk an enormous amount of his own money into the scheme, would thankfully take this scrap, remove his men from


68 DIAND, W.W. Cory to VS [telegram], 12 August 1922.

69 SC, WIMF, "Statement...regarding Men in Danger....", 8 August 1922.
the island, and drop the matter in gratitude for the government's humanitarian act. This proved to be an error in judgement on the part of the government. The relief ship, the *Teddy Bear*, only sailed in September and failed to reach its objective because of the lateness of the season. Yet the American State Department was aroused since Stefansson deliberately advertised the journey not as a rescue mission at all but as evidence of the Canadian government's determination to aid Stefansson's occupation. Stefansson always maintained that the ship had been a "supply ship" and that the $3,000 allowance was "to help us continue the Wrangel Island enterprise." This assertion, however, was certainly not the policy of the Canadian government, though it suited Stefansson's purposes.

Because Stefansson took such pains to make it appear that his enterprise implied formal recognition on the part of Canada, the United States decided to enter the fray. On 27 September 1922, the United States ambassador to Great Britain forwarded a memorandum to the Foreign Office dealing with the "national status" of the island. This American note did not advance any specific claim but merely reviewed the history of the discovery and explorations of Wrangel Island, significantly emphasizing the American participation in 1881, the fact that the *Karluk's* crew had been rescued by an American vessel, and finally that Crawford's crew, which included three Americans to begin with, had been transported to

---

70 DIAND, Memorandum by VS, 16 March 1923.

71 DIAND, VS to Finnie, 14 March 1923.
the Arctic island by the American sloop Silver Wave. 72 The American note came at the height of the Chanak crisis and was put aside; the Colonial Office did not inform Canadian officials of this development until the more pressing Chanak affair had been dealt with. On 5 November the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies, indicated to Lord Byng, that consideration of the status of Wrangel Island might be warranted. 73 Finally, late in February 1923 the impatient Colonial Office counselled Byng that Great Britain had to be advised of the official Canadian attitude toward the island. 74 King could not afford to procrastinate any longer. So once again the Prime Minister turned to his ministers and their deputies for a definite answer.

Pope, along with Loring Christie and Charles Stewart, thought it best that the Colonial Office be advised that Canada did not consider it expedient to put forth any specific claim. 75 There, it was hoped, the matter would end, to the satisfaction


73 PAC, King Papers, vol. 85, fol. 63352, Devonshire to Byng, 4 November 1922.


75 PAC, King Papers, Wrangel Island File, Pope to Mackenzie King, 22 March 1923.
of both the Soviet Union and the United States. But this unequivocal advice was not adopted. The persistent Stefansson appeared able to convince the Canadian cabinet that, strategically, the Empire as a whole would gain immeasurably. Byng, on behalf of the administration, was advised to inform the Colonial Office that Canada would not press a claim, but it was hoped that Stefansson would be allowed to make a personal statement about the strategic importance of Wrangel to imperial authorities.\textsuperscript{76} The explorer himself had recently been stressing this possibility and the Canadian government took advantage of this opening. The Colonial Office had never even hinted at an interest in the matter, but King turned the tables to his government's advantage by arguing that the question was really an imperial rather than a Canadian one. Thus he hoped to rid himself of a persistent and troublesome individual and place the onus for the retention or abandonment of Wrangel Island upon British authorities. Also, by making the matter an imperial affair, King ensured that the acquisition of Wrangel Island would not be a Canadian action and hence need not occasion retaliation by the United States, Denmark, or any other country with respect to the northern islands claimed by the Dominion.

Once Devonshire, probably assuming that authorities in London were more competent to handle the problem, accepted

\textsuperscript{76} PAC, King Papers, vol. 103, fol. 80358, Skelton to Sladen, 9 April 1923.
Byng's proposal that Stefansson be allowed to cross the Atlantic, Stefansson's pet project gained another lease on life. King could now wash his hands of the affair. He had rid himself of the matter from a Canadian standpoint by simply sending Stefansson to England, dumping the problem in the British lap.

The spring and summer of 1923 brought two new developments in the controversy: first, the partial re-Americanization of Vilhjalmur Stefansson; second, a disposition on the part of Great Britain to assert its rights to the island.

By way of insurance Stefansson had approached various Washington officials in March 1923. His attempts to influence the State Department were a failure, but his friend and schoolmate, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, turned a sympathetic ear, and through Roosevelt, Stefansson was able to meet several American admirals. Of these, the most enthusiastic was Admiral Moffett, Chief of the United States Bureau of Aeronautics. Wrote Moffett, "I am familiar


78 SC, Katherine Wright-1923 file, VS to Oryille Wright, 18 April 1923.

with what you have written and what you have done in regard to Wrangel Island. I'm only sorry that one of my fellow countrymen did not have the vision to do what you did. I am in entire agreement as to the importance of Wrangel Island and its future use."80 Stefansson was to receive similar flattering remarks in conversation with such eminent advocates of air power as General Billy Mitchell.81 The explorer was delighted by this support, but it placed him in a rather awkward position. As he confided to his loyal friend, Orville Wright, if he had had "any notion the Americans wanted Wrangel Island, I should probably have done to them rather than the Canadians," especially after the Canadian authorities had sloughed the matter off on the British.82 Now, he informed Wright, he would have to be content with seeking out responsible and influential Americans in Washington to aid with the acquisition of Wrangel Island, should the British renege.83

Though Stefansson was doubtful of the American interest in developing the island, he strove to interest a general board of the United States Navy on 7 May 1923, when he was invited to appear before it. When queried as to the political and

80 Cited in Ibid.
81 SC, Katherine Wright-1923 file, VS to Orville Wright, 18 April 1923.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
commercial possibilities of Wrangel Island the Island's possible use as a stepping stone for an Arctic air route, Stefansson handled such questions adroitly. He pointed out, somewhat inaccurately, that the 1914 expedition which had raised the flag on Wrangel had been commissioned to take possession on behalf of the King of England and reaffirm prior British rights to the island, but that the effect of such claims had lapsed. He belittled the argument that the 1914 claims had been reaffirmed by the 1921 expedition: "The boys ran up the British flag, but I don't think that counts."\textsuperscript{84} Stefansson went on to relate how disheartened he was that some Americans, and noticeably the Hearst papers, had charged him with "grabbing American territory...I have lived in the United States since I was a year old, and it never had occurred to me that I was doing anything with which Americans would find fault. I thought Americans would prefer it to be British rather than Japanese." Stefansson promised the Navy Board that he would do what he could to acquire Wrangel Island for the United States, should the British relinquish their prior rights. "Of course, I don't own it, and I cannot give it away, but there might be something I can do."

The Arctic explorer and adventurer had thus found

\textsuperscript{84}SC, Canadian government-1923 file, "Substance of Remarks Made Before the General Board of the U.S. Navy by Vilhjálmur Stefansson," 7 May 1923.
himself, in his own words, "trying to cram down the throats of the British something they do not want and for which the Americans show at least a reasonable appetite." It was to be one of his policies henceforth to attach the island to the United States, whose claim, in his opinion, was second to Britain's. This was not to suggest that Stefansson ever thought to undermine possible British rights, for nothing is further from the truth. All Stefansson was really worried about and hoped to insure against was a possible deliberate abandonment by the British of Wrangel Island to the Russians, which would have betrayed the United States' claim. It would also have destroyed his personal enterprise.

Such was Stefansson's position as stated to the Duke of Devonshire during his visit to England:

Although I am a British subject by birth, I have lived in the United States all my life...I know how anxious America is to get Wrangel Island. While I want to evade nothing in my urged that the Empire shall continue possession, I want to urge also that we publish also no decision which will lessen their chances to make good their claims...It would seem an exceedingly uncomfortable situation for me personally, to have spent all I had and all I could borrow in making sure of our rights on Wrangel Island if the result were to profit us not all and in some way injure the United States, which country...next to the British Empire--I should have liked to serve.86

85 SC, Katherine Wright-1925 file, VS to Katherine Wright, 9 May 1923.

86 SC, "D" General-1923 file, VS to Devonshire, 9 June 1923.
Even as he was writing, the British government was on the brink of reversing its stand. The Foreign Office may have continued in its doubts, but British military authorities had reappraised the situation and reached a more favourable conclusion. By the Washington Conference of 1922 the United States had been placed in a weakened position in the Pacific vis-à-vis Japan. Great Britain, too, had been adversely affected, for not only had she lost a powerful ally in Japan but she too was handicapped by the restrictive nature of a number of the treaties. British air and naval authorities, like their American counterparts, were intent upon finding any toehold in the Far East which would offset their weakened position. Might Wrangel Island not, in some limited fashion, bolster the British strategic position?

Stefansson arrived in England convinced that he must convert the British strategists and politicians to his way of thinking. He began his campaign by contacting experts in both the Admiralty and Air Ministry; through these meetings he became intimately acquainted with the energetic Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for Air, and Colonel L. S. Amery, First Lord of the Admiralty, a staunch imperialist. Both men, it seems, took Stefansson's cause under their wing and were instrumental in guiding British policy in this instance. The results were not disappointing.

87 Stefansson, *Adventure*, pp. 144-49.
The Admiralty concluded that, although Wrangel was of no great immediate value, either strategically or commercially, "the island is the only territory in a vast area to which Great Britain has any claim, and the Admiralty considers that it would be short sighted policy to surrender our claims to it."88 Not a strong recommendation for retention but, nevertheless, a reassuring one. For its part, the Air Ministry was of a similar opinion: "From a service point of view the Air Staff does not consider that Wrangel Island can be of value at present, but...they feel that its retention would prove a valuable adjunct to the development of British air policy."89 This conclusion was reached after a number of factors had been reviewed by the Air Staff. It decided that regular meteorological observations from a station in the vicinity would be of assistance to long-range weather forecasting, particularly for Canada; in addition, the establishment of a wireless telegraph would further aid meteorological reporting and assist the navigation of aircraft using any projected polar route: "It is almost unnecessary to add that the station would be of


89 SC, Air Ministry, British-1923 file, Secret Air Staff memorandum on the incorporation of Wrangel Island within the British Empire, 1 June 1923.
inestimable value, if not actually indispensable to the working of an air route through the Arctic Circle." With the development of long-range heavier-than-air craft, the report pointed out, the island could serve as a maintenance and refuelling depot. The Air Staff, like Stefansson, shared the conviction that a polar air route, say from London to Tokyo, would cut flying distances by as much as three thousand miles.

But these optimistic responses met with firm opposition from the Foreign Office which naturally examined the problem from a political point of view. For one thing Mackenzie King's administration had finally turned thumbs down on Stefansson, indicating Canada's lack of interest in the affair. Also, on May 25, two days after Stefansson had set foot on English soil, the Soviet government had sent a formal note to the Foreign Office. Although the issue had been raised previously, the Soviet government now felt constrained "to approach the British Government requesting it to use its good services with the Canadian Government in order to put an end to these raids."90 The agent, a member of the Russian Trade Delegation, also informed Britain that the Soviet Union was adopting measures "for the prevention in future of the violation of its sovereignty over the island in question,"

90 PAC, King Papers, vol. 103, fol 79827, Russian note of 25 May 1923, enclosed in a despatch from Devonshire to Byng, 20 August 1923.
the Red régime and establishing trade relations, the Foreign Office thought it quite unwise to do anything to upset the U.S.S.R. The Soviet note was followed by an American inquiry on 4 June which, although no American claim was enunciated, made it clear to the Foreign Office that the State Department was not indifferent to the fate of Wrangel Island. 91 The question of Wrangel Island therefore was referred to the whole cabinet where it would undergo close scrutiny.

Stefansson's position had been weakening considerably and he set out in earnest to educate and convert unimpressed or hostile members of the British ministry. 92 Yet for all his endeavours Stefansson could not win the full backing of the British Cabinet. From his partisans Stefansson learned that those ministers who had an opinion to express all supported his views, although they wished to move cautiously in view of Canadian "lukewarmness." 93 Out of consideration for Canadian sensibilities, as well as to forestall unfriendly action on the part of the U.S.S.R., Lord Robert Cecil suggested it would be best "to continue occupying quietly as we have done—privately." 94

91 PAC, King Papers, vol. 103, fo1. 79828, American note, 4 June 1923, enclosed in a despatch from Devonshire to Byng, 20 August 1923.
93 SC, WIMF, VS to Taylor, 15 August 1923; cf, SC, Stefansson Diary, 1 August 1923.
94 SC, Stefansson Diary, 25 July 1923.
Stefansson's plans had been dealt a heavy blow and he knew he could only accept the cabinet's decision or face outright rejection. The Baldwin administration would not even go as far as the Canadian government had done in the year previous, for, warned by that experiment, it refused to advance him any money for another rescue mission. Aware of the earlier "rescue" attempt, they wished to avoid anything that might turn it into an official imperial expedition. By the end of July, Stefansson knew he had to "go it alone", a prospect that his combative pride and stubbornness welcomed.

The British cabinet's decision was vindicated within two months. The British had been anxious to ascertain the United States' reaction in the event the United Kingdom was to press a claim. It was thought too risky to broach the question directly to the State Department; instead a number of discreet and unofficial inquiries were made. On 15 August the British chargé d'affaires in Washington, H.G. Chilton, reported that the American government would protest and that the United States were "considering the possibility of creating an air base on Wrangel Island." Still later, on 21

---

95 See pp. 377-78.

96 See pp. 390-91.

97 PAC, King Papers, vol. 103, fol. 79834, Curzon to Chilton, 10 August 1923, enclosed in a despatch from Devonshire to Byng, 25 August 1923.

September 1923, Group Captain Christie, the British Air attaché in Washington, reported to Chilton that

...at your request I have made one or two private inquiries amongst Army and Navy Officers, one of whom had been recently in personal touch with Stefansson both here and in London [presumably Archibald Roosevelt] and I gained the impression that the British-Canadian claims to Wrangel Island are considered very weak. Apart from the earlier landing of the U.S.S. Corwin, American whalers are stated to have used the Island from time to time in recent years; the fact that Stefansson's party of occupation consisted of 3 Americans and one Canadian is also being emphasized. One informant indicated to me that suggestions had been made within Navy Circles that the British-Canadian claim should be supported in return for the occupation of certain small islands outside the Treaty Zone in the Pacific by the U.S.A, which might be of strategic value to the U.S. Navy, but that this scheme had not materialized owing to the attitude of the Japanese. Apart from any political considerations, the opinion was fully expressed that Wrangel Island from the geographical aspect obviously belongs to Russian Siberia.

I have gained the impression from my conversations that [while] the U.S. Government would contest a British-Canadian claim, [it] would not, however, press its own case, but would probably support Russian sovereignty. I imagine U.S. Naval officers, who still harbour suspicion of cooperative intentions on the part of Great Britain with Japan against the operations of the U.S. fleet in the North Pacific Ocean.

It is not unlikely that the incident might be followed by American occupation of some other islands to the immediate North of the Canadian Dominions, for instance in the neighbourhood of the Parry Islands. In this connection, General Mitchell once dropped the remark to me that one of the American Geographic societies has proposed a scheme to him for a survey of the Arctic Islands in the North of Canada by aircraft.99

Thus, for Great Britain to do anything to encourage official support would stir up a hornet's nest in Washington. The

---

99 PAC, King Papers, vol. 103, fol. 80047-48, Christie to Chilton, 21 September 1923, enclosed in a despatch from Devonshire to Byng, 12 October 1923.
only diplomatic action the British had taken was to inform
the U.S.S.R. that Stefansson's relief attempt was private and
unofficial, that the question of ownership of the island was
in no way raised, and that any Soviet attempt to interfere
with the rescue would be frowned upon by Great Britain. 100

Stefansson, proceeding alone, eventually scraped up
enough money from private subscribers in Britain to pay for
a relief expedition--comprised of twelve Alaskan Eskimos and,
significantly, one American--who were to continue the private
occupation of the island by his company. On 3 August the
Donaldson departed from Nome to deposit this second colony
on Wrangel Island. It returned to Nome on 31 August bringing
bad news: the party of fourteen had been landed but of the
original colonizers only the Eskimo seamstress, Ada Blackjack,
was found alive. Three of the men, including Crawford, were
lost on the ice somewhere between Wrangel Island the the
Siberian mainland; the fourth, attended by Ada Blackjack, died
of scurvy. Like Hadley before them, they had found the island
desolate, scarce of game and fuel, and certainly not self-
supporting; Stefansson's "methods" could never apply to this
region. 101 But Stefansson could never admit this publicly and

100 DIAND, Foreign Office note to its agent in Moscow,
1 September 1923, enclosed in a despatch from Devonshire to
Byng, 17 September 1923.

101 E.g. SC, WIMF, Crawford to YS, 7 January 1923;
PAC, RMA/15, Fred Maurer to Mrs. Fred Maurer, 29 January 1923.
suppressed such evidence which undermined his credibility. The British government grew totally disenchanted with the whole episode and considered itself lucky that it had not been an official party to the disaster. Almost overnight Stefansson's "friendly arctic" had become "The Unfriendly Arctic." The Canadian government in particular came under fire, for a large segment of the press and Crawford's parents held the government, along with Stefansson, responsible for the death of young Crawford. The aggrieved parents received front-page coverage as they proceeded to attack the stunned Stefansson.

102 Stefansson contended in his autobiography that, according to Knight's diary, the men did not leave Wrangel Island because of a shortage of food. Stefansson, *Discovery*, p. 262. However, both Crawford and Maurer, the men on the spot, decided in January, 1923, that they could not survive for any length of time. "In fact, as early as last spring [1922] I considered it [leaving Wrangel Island] and when I saw how sparse seal and bear were, I decided it was unwise to stay here with the dogs all winter..." SC, WIMF, Crawford to VS, 7 January 1923. "The chief reason for our leaving is the shortage of food. There is not adequate food for all, there being only ten twenty-pound pokes of seal oil to last until next summer," PAC, RMA/15, Fred Maurer to Mrs. Fred Maurer [wife], 29 January 1923. Stefansson's reaction to Maurer's letter was as follows: "...I thought it less painful to relatives to realize that [the] immediate tragedy was accidental breaking through ice and not starvation...[I]t seems to me starvation incorrect and reflecting too much on [the] competence of [the] boys. Tell Crawfords [that] [Fred] Maurer's letter to his wife as she told me yesterday shows that trip to mainland was undertaken to carry news to me and not because of imminent food shortage." SC, WIMF, VS to A.J.T. Taylor, 4 November 1923; see also, SC, WIMF, VS to Mrs. Crawford, 5 November 1923.

103 *Saturday Night*, 15 September 1923.

104 In a token gesture the Canadian government on the advice of the Monuments Board of Canada, dedicated a plaque to Alan Crawford in 1925. For years, it hung in the entrance
Now that his activities were coming under fire from all sides, Stefansson knew he was fighting a losing battle. Baldwin's administration could not be drawn into further comment and it wisely ignored his pleas for compensation. He found little consolation in unofficial reports that the United States had reluctantly entered the squabble: "If the foreign departments of the United States and Great Britain were to flip a coin for the possession of Wrangel Island, I should not care much whether it turned up heads or tails. I have done all I can for the Empire and now it is up to others."\(^{105}\) But this was only a temporary reaction. Though Stefansson claimed it was up to others now that Great Britain had given him the cold shoulder, he attempted once more to persuade the State Department to underwrite the enterprise.

Stefansson's sale of his company to Carl Lomen, the reindeer king of Alaska, was certainly an attempt to involve the United States and to strengthen the American case. Equally, it was a way to relinquish his responsibilities, and let someone else shoulder the burden which had placed Stefansson to the old Public Archives building on Sussex Street, Ottawa, even though the "historical" event took place outside of Canadian boundaries. When the new Archives was built this plaque, as well as the one commemorating the men who had lost their lives in the Karluk disaster, were quietly stored in the Cornwall warehouses of the National Historic Sites Service.

\(^{105}\) SC, British Admiralty-1923 file, VS to Amery, 5 September 1923.
on the verge of bankruptcy.\footnote{SC, WIMF, VS to Taylor, 3 June 1924. By this time Stefansson was deeply in debt for, in addition to the $17,000 he had sunk into the Wrangel Island promotion, he received news that his Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company had fallen through. Stefansson, \textit{Discovery}, p. 267.} As the Arctic explorer explained to Lomen, the sale would spare him another year of negotiations and would lead to eventual American ownership of Wrangel Island.\footnote{SC, Lomen-1924 file, VS to Carl Lomen, 29 April 1924.} Financially exhausted and weary, Stefansson relinquished his company's interests in May 1924.\footnote{\textit{Stefansson, Adventure}, p. 300.} Now it was up to the reindeer king to carry the torch. In the end Lomen's efforts, during the fall of 1924 and in the spring of 1925, to persuade the State Department to take action also were stopped dead in their tracks,\footnote{\"...the Department does not contemplate making any statement in respect to Wrangel Island,\" SC, General-1924 file, Evan E. Young to Leonard Baldwin, 20 October 1924, enclosed in a note from Baldwin to VS, 20 October 1924. The official State Department position was thoroughly non-comittal. The United States government stated that its policy regarding Wrangel Island "did not go...beyond a reservation of all American rights in respect of the island; a readiness to discuss its status with the British Government." National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records of the Department of State relating to Internal Affairs of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-29, Microcopy No. 316, Roll no. 77, Charles Hughes to Secretary of the Navy, 31 May 1923. Publicly, however, the United States government, time and again, felt that because of its non-recognition of the Soviet regime, among other things, it was not prepared to make any statement with respect to the status of Wrangel Island. E.g. National Archives, Records... Relating to...the Soviet Union, 1910-29, Memo of conversation with Helmer H. Bryn [Minister of Norway], 12 June 1926. See pp.397-8, footnote 118.} though in the end he received...
some compensation from the United States' government—which was more than Stefansson got from either Canada or Great Britain.

In any case, the fate of Wrangel Island never had rested with the United States. As long as nothing overt was done to claim the island by the British or Canadian governments the American government seemed content to leave the problem alone. The Anglo-Soviet conference, held in London in July and August 1924, with the new Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald, brought about a final diplomatic solution. Prior to that conference the Foreign Office had canvassed the various interested departments once more, and they reiterated that Wrangel Island was of little strategic or economic significance and that "His Majesty's Government would be unwilling to adopt an attitude calculated to create difficulties with the Soviet Government unless substantial interests were at stake."\textsuperscript{110} This was basically the same position the Conservative government had taken in 1923,\textsuperscript{111} that Britain's interests in Wrangel Island were minimal and that the U.S.S.R. now had sufficient power to force a decision on the island. The British position was made known to Canada, and presumably to the United States. The Colonial Secretary simply inquired whether the King administration had "any observations to offer" but he knew in advance what sort of answer he would receive. Canadian officialdom was sick of the whole issue; Mackenzie

\textsuperscript{110}PAC, King Papers, vol. 121, fol. 91841-43, J.H. Thomas [Colonial Secretary] to Byng, 18 June 1924.

\textsuperscript{111}See pp. 390-91.
King, for his part, had managed to side-step for two years. On 18 July 1924, the same day that the inquiry was made, Byng hastily, and no doubt with relief, despatched a telegram stating that the British attitude was shared by the Government of Canada. ¹¹² When the issue reached the conference table in London, Mr. Ponsonby, in his reply on behalf of the British delegation declared that: "His Britannic Majesty's Government lay no claim to the island of Wrangel."¹¹³ To which his Soviet counterpart, Mr. Rakovski, replied: "I am glad that one of the points, although a small point, which caused misunderstanding between the Soviet Union and Great Britain has been removed and I would suggest that this should be recorded in the minutes of the Conference."¹¹⁴

This pronouncement was made on 6 August 1924. Within three weeks the Russian warship Red October was removing the twelve Eskimos and one American who had been making their home on Wrangel Island since 1923. To justify its action the U.S.S.R. claimed that the party had been operating on Russian

¹¹² PAC, King Papers, vol. 121, fol. 92015, Byng to Thomas, 18 July 1924.

¹¹³ PAC, King Papers, vol. 122, fol. 92334, Declaration made on behalf of the British Delegation at the Anglo-Soviet Conference, 6 August 1924, copy enclosed in despatch, Arnold to Byng, 10 September 1924.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.
territory without a licence and without proper authorization. The American schooner *Herman*, on its way to rescue the party at the identical time, failed in its attempt to reach the island, so an unwanted confrontation between the Russians and the Americans was avoided. According to the press, the American vessel had been beaten back by Arctic gales after managing to reach Herald Island, forty miles east of Wrangel. The _Red October_ spirited the colonizers to Vladivostock where their American leader, Charles Wells, died from pneumonia. The Eskimo survivors, eleven in all, eventually were returned to their home in Golovin Bay, seventy-five miles east of Nome.

As a result of this alleged territorial violation, the U.S.S.R. was led on 15 April 1926, to incorporate the sector principle into her own national legislation to protect her Arctic interests, basing the statement upon a Russian imperial

115
*Toronto Daily Star*, 22 January 1925.

116
*New York Times*, 18 October 1924.

117
*Toronto Daily Star*, 22 January 1925.

118
*Indianapolis Star*, 14 February 1925. Carl Lomen protested to the State Department, asking it to intervene. However, Evan E. Young of the State Department advised Lomen to file a formal private complaint against the Soviet government protesting the *Red October*'s activities. Lomen did so to the tune of $30,000. It is interesting to note that the United States government, upon the failure of the U.S.S.R. to recognize Lomen's claim, eventually did pay Lomen $46,630, $16,630 of which was interest, as compensation for losses incurred in his colonization venture. All one can conclude from this is that the United States had promised Lomen its support
decree of September 1916, Wrangel Island became an integral part of the U.S.S.R. within the sweeping claim now put forth by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.:

All discovered lands and islands as well as those that may in the future be discovered, which are not at the date of publication of this decree recognized by the Government of the U.S.S.R. as a territory of a foreign power, are declared to belong to the U.S.S.R. within the following limits:

In the Northern Arctic Ocean, from the northern coast of the U.S.S.R. up to the North Pole, between the Meridian 32° 4' 35" east longitude from Greenwich, passing along the eastern side of Vaidya Bay through the Triangulation mark on Kerkursk Cape, and Meridian 168° 49' 30" west longitude from Greenwich passing through the middle of the straight which separates Ratmanov and Krukenstern of the Diomede group of islands in the Bering Straits.119

The Soviet sectoral claim, like the Canadian, has never been accorded international recognition. However, since 1926 the Russians, their claims uncontested, have occupied, colonized, and developed Wrangel Island and islands similar to it, to their own benefit. To the Russians, the incorporation of Wrangel Island was a stage in the growth of Soviet internal

but had changed its mind and decided to make up Lomen's loss in recognition of a mistake or failure in policy. Lomen himself reported that the colonization attempt he had adopted from Stefansson had the backing of Secretary of State Hughes: "I had already seen Secretary of States Hughes before we went there, and he urged me to...hold the island." Ralph Brown, "Wrangel Island Has Had Fantastic History," Anchorage Daily Times, February 10 and 11, 1960.

control over the territories of the Czars and signalized the frustration of another diabolical capitalist scheme of encirclement. 120

The Wrangel Island episode of 1921-24 perhaps indicates that in the early years the King autonomist policy was not fully formed and that the King administration to a degree was playing Canada's new role in external affairs by ear. In contrast with Chanak, when Canada refused to accept a commitment made by a previous Conservative (Borden) government, Wrangel Island initially was a Canadian affair which, having become too hot to handle, was foisted on the Imperial government. Indiscriminate remarks by various Canadian officials including Mackenzie King, and vigorous efforts and manoeuvres by Stefansson had kept the matter in the public eye and caused a flurry of concern among members of the international

120 M. Velichko, "On Wrangel Island," Soviet Woman (1948), pp. 26-28. Soviet authorities though, do not condemn Stefansson's actions in this episode, perhaps out of respect for his status as a "friend" of the Soviet Union. Instead, excuses are made for him, "for he was not experienced in the problems of international law and was misled by the anti-Soviet statements and speeches of the English and Canadian press." From the "Introduction" by Dr. G.A. Agranat, ed., in E.A. Ol'khina, Vilhjalmur Stefansson (Moscow, 1970), pp. 5-7. Translated for the author by Miss Anna Boreiko, Arctic Institute of North America, Montreal, Canada.
community. If King had rejected Stefansson's scheme, the matter would quietly have come to an end during the summer of 1922. Instead, the Prime Minister withheld a clear-cut decision until he had roused the ire of the Soviet Union and the apprehensions of the United States. Canada had mishandled the affair and Stefansson had helped to create an international incident. 121

Apart from Stefansson, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States were all content to see the island recognized as Russian, but a peculiar train of events (chiefly Stefansson's meddling) had complicated the matter, breeding apprehension and distrust. Canada, when her government did give the matter serious thought, concluded that the island was not worth keeping, both because of its limited value to Canada and because recognition of her claims there might have put in question her own tenuous claims to the Arctic archipelago.

---

121 To his credit, Mackenzie King conveniently turned the tables and had argued that the matter was really an imperial affair. Months earlier, in refusing to co-operate with imperial policy at Chanak, King had implied that the Dominion could pass judgment on just what was or was not a Canadian interest and act on that premise. The Wyangel Island controversy extended this principle, for the Dominion attempted to dictate the course of action Imperial authorities should take—something the British had failed to convince Canada of in September of 1922. For their part, had the British so wanted, they could have declared themselves incompetent to deal with the controversy. One wonders what the Canadian reaction to such a position would have been. Yet the British government felt duty-bound to relieve the colonials of their predicament, and to act circumspectly, deferring to Canadian views at every step.
The Anglo-Canadian claim to Wrangel Island was dropped in favour of the principle of contiguity, and of the practical goal of promoting amicable relations with the Soviet Union and the United States.

For Stefansson's Canadian career it was a mortal blow, signalling his fall from grace in the halls of power. Again, as in the reindeer project, a lack of detailed planning, incomplete data, and second-hand reporting, sometimes deliberately falsified by others, sealed the fate of the project. Overeagerness and an unscientific approach were at bottom once again.

Stefansson on occasion had used questionable methods to force the issue; at times, he had handicapped government officials by arguing that he was claiming Wrangel Island for the good of Canada solely, without mentioning that he had his own business interests to protect as well. Yet in no way could his actions benefit the Dominion. Ottawa now realized that Stefansson was embarrassing, hence dispensable—especially since his key associates, Borden and Meighen, were out of power. He had to go, even if it meant that the Dominion would have to sacrifice a new programme in northern exploration. Besides, since his return from the Arctic in 1918, Stefansson's "track record" in Ottawa had not been an enviable one. The Geological Survey, the Department of the Interior, External Affairs, and the Prime Minister's office had all had their fill. Stefansson had alienated too many administrative elements, too often.
CHAPTER X

EXIT STEFANSSON

The Wrangel Island fiasco spelled the end for Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Canadian career. Never again would he experience or wield such influence within the governments of Canada, or Great Britain for that matter. Most of his later Arctic-related activities were carried out on the public information level in the United States where his reputation remained—and still remains—unblemished. Yet to assume that the Wrangel Island tragedy or the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company failures were solely responsible for his demise, overlooks a number of other salient points which, on the surface, seem trivial, but nevertheless contributed to his fall from favour. Contemporaneous with the reindeer and Wrangel Island affairs, Stefansson was involved with other problems with other parts of government. He attempted to shirk his publication responsibilities for the government in favour of a programme of public lecturing and popular writing. The feud with the Andersons and other members of the Geological Survey would continue and be intensified following the publication of his *The Friendly Arctic* (1921),

402.
and would cause a split between the Geological Survey and the Department of the Naval Service. He had already alienated a substantial portion of the Department of the Interior and External Affairs. Could the Canadian government afford to tolerate such a disruptive element as Stefansson within the policy-making and administrative segments of government, and face the prospect of an agitated and disgruntled band of loyal civil servants? Or would Stefansson, who claimed to be just as loyal, be made to realize that his presence in Ottawa was no longer desired? This predicament had to be resolved.

The disagreements between the Geological Survey-Naval Service elements of the government and Stefansson revolved around the publication of the results of the 1913-18 Expedition. There were a number of reasons for Stefansson's tardiness in discharging his obligation to wind up the affairs of the Expedition. But none of these were really valid, and his delays were not taken very kindly by the government departments involved. Stefansson had none but himself to blame for the predicament in which he eventually found himself after 1918. Naturally, the government was aware Stefansson had contracted to give public lectures once he had returned to civilization, but it had expected him to fulfill certain duties, namely the
completion of a "full report" only then would he be free to lecture.1

Desbarats was intent upon tying up the loose ends of the Expedition, and there were many of these on Stefansson's side, particularly regarding the lands he had discovered and explored north of Prince Patrick Island. This was, naturally, of prime importance to the Canadian government which had put so high a priority on discovery and was concerned to establish its title beyond question to such lands; the government had to be able to confront any foreign encroachment with an indisputable claim. However, as an annoyed Desbarats complained:

We have really no definite location of these lands nor any idea of their extent. We have your first report announcing the discovery of the lands and giving a position which did not correspond with the charts. It is quite possible of course that the older definitions were not correct. We lack information entirely as to the whole exploration, having merely received fragmentary reports which it has not been possible to piece together so as to give a connected history of the work done by the expedition. It would seem that your parties have covered a good deal of territory and have made a number of trips into the new land which you discovered, we have little information as to the results that have been obtained from the information which has been gathered. We have no information which would allow our laying down... a chart of the lands which you have discovered...2

Under the circumstances it was very important for reasons of state and Stefansson's well-being that he produce the fullest possible statement of his discoveries to complement the Southern Party's publications which were well on their way

1PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 4, Desbarats to VS, 8 May 1918.

2PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 4, Desbarats to VS, 29 June 1918.
to completion.\textsuperscript{3}

But again, Stefansson had other ideas. He preferred to embark on his lecture tour immediately and to leave the Canadian government sitting on its hands until he had decided it was time to publish the official reports. According to Stefansson, who was still recovering in St. Stephen's Hospital in the Yukon in 1918, the lecture tour was to be for the benefit of the Red Cross, whose efforts during the war which was still raging in Europe, should be aided.\textsuperscript{4} The Canadian government knew virtually nothing about his plans, yet Stefansson confided to John Greenough that Ottawa had allowed him to begin his lecture series "sooner than would be the case in ordinary course because my entire share of any profits (above current expenses) is to go to the Red Cross."\textsuperscript{5} Stefansson was confident that he could satisfy Desbarats with a three page summary of the highlights of his explorations,\textsuperscript{6} but if the government persisted then he would cancel his "arrangements" provided they did not injure financially his lecture manager, Lee Keedick.\textsuperscript{7} He even reminded the government

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{4}\textit{PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 4, VS to John Greenough [President of American Geographical Society] 17 July 1918.}
\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid., also AMNH, VS to Osborn, 17 July 1918, file 545H.}
\textsuperscript{6}\textit{PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 4, VS to Desbarats, 26 July 1918.}
\textsuperscript{7}\textit{SC, CAE/Desbarats-1918 file, VS to Desbarats, 4 August 1918.}
if they took this course he could not guarantee his performance for them. Certainly, Stefansson was growing less diffident with his employers, and his self-confidence was verging increasingly in his relations with the civil servants towards impudence and arrogance.

Stefansson probably desired to ease himself out of the government's grasp, hoping his preliminary reports would suffice to meet their terms and that a plea that patriotic lectures for the Red Cross would make them more sympathetic and less insistent. It certainly would give greater legitimacy to his lecture tour, and speed him along his career. But the truth of the matter was that neither the Canadian government nor the Red Cross knew about these supposed arrangements—the latter not until it was informed of Stefansson's plans by Rudolph Anderson, watchdog. In any event, it was against Red Cross policy "to permit any such lectures or to permit the name of the Red Cross to be used in connection with lectures, commercial enterprises, etc., of any kind." Stefansson's statements to the Canadian government and the press then were "entirely unauthorized."

As yet Desbarats did not know this, and Anderson kept the gleeful news to himself for several weeks to allow Stefansson more rope. The only card that the Deputy Minister had to play was the old argument that such a tour

\[\text{8 Ibid.}\]

\[\text{9 PAC, RMA/4, Ralph Wolf [legal advisor, American Red Cross], to Anderson, 10 September 1918.}\]

\[\text{10 Ibid.}\]
Would defeat the objects of the government in manning, equipping and financing the expedition. The object of this expedition was to obtain information for the benefit of the people of Canada and I must repeat its main task was to record this information in proper shape, so that it can be published and laid before the public, the object of the Department would be entirely defeated if Canada would obtain no return for its expenditure in the efforts it has put forth in this expedition.11

Desbarats' own department would certainly be in a very embarrassing position if Stefansson did not submit his findings in full for publication. The Department of Marine and Naval Service, (formerly the Naval Service) under whose auspices the Canadian Arctic Expedition had been organized, conducted and largely financed and which no doubt was anxious to conduct any future polar expeditions, had virtually nothing on paper to show for its time, patience and large amount of money:

The Southern Branch of the expedition is getting its reports into shape and they will soon be available for publication. The reports will give a large amount of information and show that this branch of the expedition has done much good work. If the report of the northern branch is lacking and no information is published regarding the work accomplished by that section the inference will be clear that there is nothing to say on the subject and nothing worth publishing has been accomplished by the northern part of the expedition. You would be the first one to regret such a result, and it would, undoubtedly, lead to a severe attack on the government and yourself.12

The Minister of Naval Service was insistent that the report be completed as soon as possible so that the Department's

11 PAC, RG#2, 84-5, Desbarats to VS, 13 September 1918.

12 ibid.
involvement would be indicated.

But the confident, ambitious, self-willed Stefansson was not to be bullied, and was determined to get his way. He immediately turned about and arrogantly scolded the government in his best, most "reasonable" vein, particularly Desbarats, for being so shortsighted:

I...took it for granted that the government would be glad if I could capitalize the prominence of the expedition in the public mind and turn all the receipts into patriotic and useful channels. If I was wrong in this, it is because I do not understand the attitude of the government. I thought all energies of our people were (and ought to be) bent on winning the war (I have seen it frequently so stated) and I was assured by lecture managers that considerable money could be secured for the Red Cross in this way.

...I equally fail to understand [the Government's] attitude towards the increase and diffusion of knowledge. I fail to understand how the people of Canada will lose any of the fruits of our work by hearing a narration of some of [the experience] from the mouths of men who did the work. If it is duly announced, as I have always taken it for granted it would be, that the government is lending one of its servants to the Red Cross for the purpose of securing increased funds for work of patriotism and of mercy, and if it is announced that the information given is the property of the people of Canada, then I fail to understand how any aims or ends of the government or people of Canada are being interfered with. It is well known that few besides specialists ever consult government technical reports. Besides, it is impossible to represent technical results in a popular lecture. I feel sure that were one of the members of the expedition to tell a popular audience how to build our snow houses so as to be comfortable, how we dress so as to be always warm and dry though no artificial heat is available for the drying of clothes, and how we secure our food as we go and thus free ourselves from the limitations of former travellers who thought they needed to haul their food with them—if one of us explained these and similar things, doing so would probably capture the interest of many who would not otherwise consult
the formal reports, and the total publicity of the
technical results therein contained would be in-
creased. Certainly such results would divert no
one's attention from the knowledge secured by the
expedition or from the credit due the government
for supplying it.\textsuperscript{13}

Stefansson, whose assumptions about the government's position
were completely unfounded, could not understand why the govern-
ment was so determined that the results should be published
under official auspices. Would he not be aiding Desbarats
by seeking a wider forum? Certainly it would do himself no
harm.

Stefansson acknowledged that he was obliged to follow
government orders, and that if the government decided he must
give up his idea of lecturing for the Red Cross he would
obey.\textsuperscript{14} But he implied it would be with bad grace, and the
government's face would be blackened for discouraging such
patriotic work on Stefansson's part.

Desbarats might have been put off by such arguments,
but when he found out that Stefansson's plan of support for
the Red Cross was not acceptable even to the institution in
question,\textsuperscript{15} he was in a much stronger position to "persuade"
Stefansson to live up to his end of the bargain. The explorer
had accepted a job with the government and he should follow
through by providing the sponsoring agency with the information

\textsuperscript{13} PAC, RG42, 84<2->29/yol, 5, VS to Desbarats, 19
September 1918.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{15} PAC, Desbarats Diary, 2 October 1918.
it wanted and was entitled to, so as to disseminate it through regular official publications—not through any lecture tours. The rebuke to Stefansson was harsh but deserved, for, as Desbarats pointed out, "I explained this to you about two years ago when I sent instructions not to continue your explorations in Arctic regions but to return south, as the government considered that the needs of the war were paramount and that any available funds should be devoted to war purposes." Stefansson had let down the government and the war effort from 1916 onward. Now, apparently as a means of evading his contractual responsibility, he had the impudence to adopt a specious, sanctimonious posture about his patriotism and lecture a government that had sacrificed everything for the war effort. The government was not prepared to tolerate this, now that Stefansson was in the south and could not pretend ignorance of the government's real position.

By November, 1918, Stefansson realized he could not beg off the responsibility for winding up his work with the government if he wanted the government's co-operation for any further ventures, uppermost of which was the musk-ox project. Accordingly, Stefansson now asked Lee Keedick, his lecture

---

16 PAC, RG42, 84-2-5, Desbarats to YS, 3 October 1918.

17 SC, General Considerations-1918 file, YS to Lee Keedick, 14 November 1918.
manager, for a postponement of the lecture tour, arguing that it would be dangerous to do both simultaneously, for it would result in his spreading himself too thinly, and weaken his individual efforts:

For my personal success it is absolutely essential that I have time to get my scientific work in shape. My first magazine stories cannot appear before March [1919] and need not appear before April. My book will not appear before next fall. You have already seen what folly it is to try to compete with war, and the period of readjustment till the treaties of peace will be signed the public will be full of interest in the shifting of the boundaries of states and in the establishment of republics after monarchies, I urge upon you, for all these reasons, as great a postponement of the lectures as possible. For myself, I would not care if I lost money—I think we shall gain money—by waiting till my scientific work is in shape. 18

Stefansson acknowledged the predicament he was in, but argued that it was more in Keedick's interests than his own to delay the lecture series. But Keedick would have none of this and, like the Canadian government, was determined to make his performer abide by the contract he had signed at the outset of the expedition. 19 Stefansson had placed himself in a very difficult position, especially since his lecture tour would

18 Ibid.

19 Stefansson had been introduced to Keedick in London in 1913 by Shackleton who was under contract to Keedick. Stefansson was impressed by the possibilities of lecturing after his return from the Canadian Arctic Expedition and signed on. Stefansson, Discovery, p. 212.
take him far away from the centre of his influence, Ottawa. He had bitten off more than he could chew: write a popular book on the expedition; complete his duties for the Canadian government; give a series of lectures; and simultaneously promote the musk-ox venture and a little later the Wrangel Island project. It would have required a delicate touch to balance all these activities, and as time went on Stefansson, continually complaining about his self-inflicted tasks, was left to extricate himself by his own devices. Still there was never any thought of abandoning the lucrative lecture circuit.

Stefansson was too busy with these various other

20

To John Rutherford, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Reindeer and Musk-Ox, Stefansson complained that his efficiency as a commission member was impaired by Keedick's demands. SC, WIMF, VS to Rutherford, 5 January 1920.

21

Stefansson tried unsuccessfully to break his contract with Keedick claiming that his lecture manager was discrediting him by issuing untruthful promotional material. SC, 1920 file, VS to Professor William H. Hobbs [Department of Geology, University of Michigan], 31 January 1920. Stefansson also argued that his respiratory system was being adversely affected by lecturing and that he was not well. SC "Safe" file, Report of Frank D. Miller, M.D., to Dr. Milhau [Stefansson's attorney], 23 June 1920. Keedick, for his part, in January, 1922, sued Stefansson for breach of contract, and Stefansson responded with a countersuit of $20,000 claiming injury to his professional reputation. New York Tribune, 18 January 1922. The court decided in favour of Keedick. SC, "Safe" file, Lee Keedick vs V. Stefansson [New York Supreme Court, New York County, n. d.]. After the incident Stefansson went right on lecturing despite his professed "malady" allegedly aggravated by lecturing. He placed himself under the direction of the Ellison-White organization, the Affiliated Lyceum and Chautauqua Association, which paid Stefansson's law suit. Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 218-19.
matters to be able to give the government a first-rate summary of the expedition and Desbarats, apparently, was willing to release Stefansson when he submitted a brief ten-page typed manuscript. Stefansson went through the motions of submitting this final report but he did not attempt "a summary of the previous four years work as it seems to me anyone interested can look back to the Department reports for facts. However, should you desire such a summary, it can doubtless be extracted by some clerk in your office from the reports already published." Stefansson was not going to do more writing for the government than was absolutely necessary; other projects were of more importance to him, especially the popular narrative for the Macmillan Company.

Stefansson was also worried about each specialist on the Southern Section writing his own report of his scientific findings. If this were proceeded with he, as commander, would be left with nothing to report on beyond his own activities. He considered this unwise from a scientific point of view; and he also believed it was a deliberate personal slight by former members of the Southern Section, a derogation of his position and right as commander to report on the expedition

22SC, CAE/Desbarats-1919 file, VS to Desbarats, 13 June 1919.
as a whole. Referring to the case of the geologist O'Neill, Stefansson complained about his own position by going to the top as soon as the Prime Minister had returned from his labours in Paris:

The attitude of the Survey is that Mr. O'Neill is a highly trained geologist, and there was no other highly trained geologist on the expedition. They say that their professional standards require that they publish nothing except the work done by specialists. My reply to this is if this attitude had been maintained by other Polar expeditions, such, for instance, as Scott's first expedition or Shackleton's, there would have been no geological results published by them.

It has been a matter of practice, however, upon the return of every Polar expedition, that all geological information gathered by any member has been put at the disposal of some such specialists as a university professor in geology and then published yielding results which are commonly considered to be notable contributions to science.

Should our expedition adopt the attitude of publishing the information secured by such specialists ... it will result in the suppression of much valuable knowledge. This attitude appears to me to be a sort of "labour union spirit" where those not members of a technical craft are looked upon as scabs, and their valuable results disregarded by mere reason that they are not members of a union.23

Stefansson gained the Prime Minister's promise to look into the entire matter,24 and his position in this new row was supported by Desbarats when the latter was queried by Borden. Desbarats in fact, pointed out to Borden that the Southern Section's disinclination to recognize Stefansson's

23 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, VS to Desbarats, 10 July 1919.

24 Ibid.
authority, as first affirmed in the Order-in-Council of 22 February 1913, had been carried over after the expedition had returned, and that this spirit was still hampering the publication of the official report. Although some headway had been made, Desbarats implied that the attitude of the Geological Survey was the main stumbling block. He suggested that Stefansson be appointed editor of the Expedition's publications to supervise the project inasmuch as "the full responsibility for the expedition was placed on Mr. Stefansson. Alternately, he suggested that a small committee be established, with Stefansson as one of the members, to ensure the publication of the report. But although R.G. McConnell, Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines, "gave qualified support to this project...no action has been taken by the Geological Survey." The Geological Survey officers, it appears, would only do their work independent of Stefansson, or not at all. At this stage a feud appears to have arisen not merely between individual members of the Geological Survey and Stefansson, but between the two government agencies.

From the side, certain members of the Arctic Biological

25 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, Desbarats to Borden, 12 July 1919.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.
Committee, which was given some vague responsibility for publishing the reports, were fearful about allowing Stefansson to write the narrative of the entire expedition for "it was important that a fair account of the work of the [Southern] party should be given." Stefansson may not have liked what the Survey men would write, but it is obvious that the Geological Survey men feared Stefansson would tamper with their own reports for his own ends.

At an early meeting in Desbarats' office guarantees had been given that the Southern Section would have its own narrative, but somewhere along the way Anderson gained the impression that Stefansson wanted to do the entire report. Anderson had overestimated Stefansson, who certainly was not behind this alleged manoeuvre. In fact, entangled as he then was, Stefansson would have welcomed Anderson writing an expanded, fuller narrative than the one he had already published; and he advised that Anderson's report be written

28 PAC, RG45, Geological Survey Branch file 4078C/57, 'W. Stefansson, Personal and Controversies', Report of the Minutes of the Arctic Biological Committee, 12 November 1919. Members of this committee were E.E. Prince, Dr. A.B. Macallum, C. Gordon Hewitt, Rudolph Anderson, and James M. Macoun.

29 Ibid.

along the lines Anderson later suggested:

A comprehensive summary of the scientific results would...have to be one of the last if not the last volume to appear, but it has been my understanding you desire a narrative of the expedition to be published as early as possible. In this I have agreed and it seemed to me that Dr. Anderson should write the narrative in so far as the southern section is concerned, but his point may be well taken that the narrative which he has already published is adequate. Still, it hardly seemed so to me when I read it last winter and I would have liked to get from him another more fuller more readable narrative to use in connection with the one I am to prepare....

It does not seem to me to be desirable to combine the narrative of the southern section...with the popular exposition of the scientific results, as Dr. Anderson has in mind. I should think they ought to be in two separate volumes or at least two separate sections. If Dr. Anderson feels he cannot write a better narrative than he has already done, we will have to make the best of it and use it either changed or unchanged.

...It would seem to me the best of making a summary would be that O'Neill should summarize the geological results, Chipman the geographic, and Anderson the zoological, and either Jenness or myself the anthropological. But the narrative of the journeys and the field activities of all the members of the southern party should be written by Dr. Anderson.31

By mid-1919 this rather silly publication controversy had settled down, and the technical and scientific reports were being worked up for publication. Yet little was being done with the publication of the official narratives by either Anderson—who had a long history of failing to publish accounts although it was expected of him—or Stefansson who was too preoccupied with his private affairs: lecture tours, lobbying

31SC, CAE/Desbarats-1919 file, VS to Desbarats, 20 August 1919.
in government circles, and writing his unofficial version of
the adventure, The Friendly Arctic. The latter of course
allowed Stefansson far greater freedom to express his own views
than any publication under government auspices. When it was
released late in 1921, it proved to be a bombshell in Ottawa,
especially amongst the members of the Geological Survey and
the scientists of the National Museum who were helping to
work up the reports. Moreover, the appearance of the book
further complicated the publication of the government reports,
and resurrected the old personal animosities.

The Friendly Arctic, a title suggested to Stefansson
by Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic, was
Stefansson's version of the 1913-18 Expedition, its trials
and tribulations, and of course, Stefansson's multitude of
achievements in the face of adversity and near-mutiny. The
topics ranged from the confrontation at Nome, the Collinson
Point episode, and the many wranglings over priorities in terms

32 SC, Correspondence-1922 file, VS to Grosvenor, 29
May 1922.

33 Both sides of the controversy have been examined
in previous chapters. Suffice it to say here, that all that
appeared in The Friendly Arctic was Stefansson's justification
and rationale for his actions.
of ships and supplies, Stefansson's exploits and his boundless self-confidence, and his theories on Arctic matters. Naturally, Stefansson comes off very handsomely in his account, while others, particularly Anderson and other members of the Geological Survey, are painted in less than rosy colours. The commander of the Expedition, as has been shown, was less than objective in his treatment of the subject. Anderson's initial reaction to the book was obvious; Stefansson had made, Anderson assured his superior, many libellous and underhanded statements, which placed him and the entire Civil Service under a cloud. 34

Answering Stefansson, Anderson believed, would merely play into his hands by giving him the publicity he was after; on the other hand, there were many reasons why Stefansson should be answered and exposed. 35 "The important thing now is the inquiry, a Royal Commission if possible," said Mrs. Anderson, who shared her husband's sentiments. 36 "We shall

34 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Anderson to Charles Camsell [Deputy Minister of Mines who succeeded R.G. McConnell in the fall of 1920], 30 December 1921.

35 Ibid.

36 PAC, RMA#15, Mrs. Anderson to Captain R. Bartlett, 2 January 1922.
have to pulverize Mr. Stefansson but he deserves it for
doing such things."37 The Andersons were confident that they
would triumph:

Steffy does not realize that he is fighting the
Canadian government when he fights Rudolph. He
[had] better study the condition of the country
before starting a thing like this....[t]here is
no room at the present time in Canada for VS and
Rudolph at the same time unless Steffy reforms.
He may. He is not a good 'villain'. And he is
brilliant to do anything if he wants to do it,
[but] he must be taught to play fair.38

With little apparent official notice being taken by
the Geological Survey, Anderson and Jenness hoisted their
standard on their own initiative and soon they were supported
by J.J. O'Neill, who was now a professor of geology at McGill
University.39 The newspapers and the Canadian Press knew a
good story when they saw one. Anderson asked for a "full
government inquiry" into the affairs of the last expedition,
charging that Stefansson unjustly accused the scientific staff
of "attempted mutiny" and "insubordination"; that the whole
expedition was really "at bottom, a newspaper and magazine

37  Ibid.

38  PAC, RMA/15, Mrs. Anderson to Mrs. A. Allstrand
[mother], 5 January 1922.

39  For Jenness' initial views, which were very similar
to Anderson's, see "Declares Stefansson Acted Aggressively,"
Toronto Star, 14 January 1922. For O'Neill's views, see
"Charges against Stefansson True,..." Montreal Daily Star,
16 January 1922. O'Neill considered Stefansson a smooth-
tongued diplomat whose goal was self-advancement through
publicity at the expense of genuine scientific activity.
exploiting scheme" paid for by the people of Canada. In fact, Anderson charged, Stefansson had been insubordinate in attempting to change the complexion of the expedition, and evading all government notices to return to civilization. Moreover, he implied, Stefansson had been derelict in his duty because he pursued a policy of "wild extravagance", buying extra ships, supplies, and dubious services which cost the Canadian government and taxpayer over $500,000 when the expedition was to have cost originally $75,000. Stefansson's publicity about living off the country was an ironic joke, for his "foraging was done on the people who pay the taxes."40 These were quite strong charges, but they certainly were nothing new, for as far back as 1916, when the Southern Section had returned, similar charges had been "leaked" to the press. Between 1917 and the airing of these charges of Anderson's in 1922, similar stories and rumours had been bandied around Ottawa, some of which were directly attributable to Anderson. And when one looks at the real story of the Canadian Arctic Expedition these charges had more than a little truth to them.

One could even argue that The Friendly Arctic was a reply to these earlier stories, and sympathize with Stefansson for being the victim of calumny. True, Stefansson loved and sought for publicity, but he had taken quite a bit of abuse, and some of his closest friends, including even Sir Robert Borden, suggested he ought to lay his cards on the table and

40 Montreal Gazette, 14 January 1922.
turn on his critics. Anderson, who was a novice in the realm of newspaper publicity, had sown the wind and would have to face the prospect of reaping the whirlwind.

Anderson had certainly held nothing back when he spoke or wrote to innumerable individuals about the Expedition and Stefansson. He was almost beside himself in 1918 when he wrote to Dr. Isaiah Bowman, editor of the Geographical Review and secretary of the Explorer's Club in New York, about the impending election of Stefansson as president of the latter organization. Anderson's remarks which bordered on libel, labelled Stefansson a coward, a publicity seeker, a liar, a "bounder", and an "international Socialist"; all of which were anathema to himself as a man of principle, "of honour as an ex-soldier of the United States, an officer and...a gentleman, a man and a Mason." Such extreme vilification could only be tolerated for so long even by Stefansson who was tolerant about most matters. Stefansson wanted, naturally, to achieve fame by publishing an account of the Expedition, but he could not afford to let his detractors escape. Should he therefore lay bare all the circumstances and controversies as he saw them? It certainly would make good copy; and was he not also interested in setting the record, as he saw it, straight? Silence about the key issues could inspire additional condemnation.

41 PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 5, Anderson to Bowman, 6 November 1918.
Stefansson unburdened himself of these doubts and asked the advice of both Desbarats and Borden who were, admittedly, sympathetic to him, as to whether he should ignore certain aspects of the story, but he saw no way in avoiding the many controversies that abounded between 1913-18. Nevertheless, before the book went to press, he sought advice to salve his conscience about his subsequent course of action "to tell everything as frankly and fairly as I could" rather than "to tell a dozen lies to cover up the original one." 42 Desbarats, several other "friends", 43 and Borden agreed with him. Borden went so far as to write a glowing introduction for the book.

When Anderson suggested to Borden that he had been unwise in writing the introduction to *The Friendly Arctic*, Borden replied forcefully that his preface had relation to the achievements of the expedition therein detailed, I cannot recall conversation respecting the difficulties that arose between Mr. Stefansson and other members of the expedition, except one occasion. Mr. Stefansson explained that certain charges had been made against him, and he felt some hesitation in putting forward his side of the case....He asked my opinion as the course I should pursue, and I advised him that he should set forth the circumstances as he understood them. It seemed to me advisable that this should be done, 42

---

42 SC, CAE/unmarked file, VS to Desbarats, 24 August 1920.

43 SC, CAE/unmarked file, VS to Desbarats, 17 September 1920.
for the sake of historic accuracy, and in justification of the action he had taken. Borden was still a powerful, highly respected individual, a man of complete integrity and honesty. Stefansson knew this and he had been overjoyed when Borden had consented to write the preface to his book, for he felt it would give it and the author the stamp of authority and legitimacy. Anderson, no doubt, was convinced that Borden had been hoodwinked by Stefansson, but he would get nowhere with the former Prime Minister.

Anderson had to look elsewhere for the counterattack on Stefansson. He could direct an appeal through the press, for the president of the Parliamentary Press Gallery informed him that the newspapers of Canada would be glad for someone to take Stefansson to task, and would be willing to offer him their services. This might have been the case, but probably Anderson would have been exploited, producing sensationalisms comparable to Stefansson's own, in the long run, for no one's benefit outside the press, except perhaps Stefansson's. The government, particularly the higher echelons of the Geological Survey, feared this prospect and were anxious to avoid public airing of the differences. The day after the

44 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Borden to Anderson, 11 May 1923.

45 SC, 1920-26 file, VS to Borden, 13 October 1921.

46 PAC, RMA/4, Anderson to William F. Riley [Lawyer in Des Moines, Iowa], [27 January 1922].
newspapers appeared (14 January 1922), Anderson, Chipman, and Jenness were instructed that no more interviews were to be given to the press until the minister, the Honorable Charles Stewart, decided "what action is to be taken on behalf of our men." 47 The Geological Survey wanted to reply to Stefansson on the scholarly level without the full glare of publicity.

Rather than have the battle fought in the newspapers, Camsell, speaking for the Geological Survey, thought it best that a former member of the Southern Section should write a critical review of The Friendly Arctic for an internationally respected geographic journal. He implied that someone no longer connected with the Branch would be preferable and he approached J.J. O'Neill for the purpose. 48 O'Neill sympathized with Camsell for

I, for one, do not care to have an application for some important position refused on the grounds that I have a reputation of being an insubordinate, cantankerous person, whose outlook is very narrow, and who may be expected to show the white feather if called upon to volunteer for any apparently hazardous task: such is the reputation Mr. Stefansson has seen fit to impute to the members of the Scientific Staff. 49

But even though O'Neill felt he had been wronged, he would not

47 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Camsell to Mr. L.L. Bolton, 15 January 1922.


49 Ibid.
speak up.

Apparently the only ones who had the intestinal fortitude to speak up to Stefansson were those very same people who were being silenced by their superiors. Stefansson, who may have had an inkling of their quandary could not have planned it better if he had set his mind to it. Everything seemed to be going Stefansson's way, and everything seemed to conspire against his "enemies".

The former members of the Southern Party, some still in the employ of the government, chafed under the inactivity of their superiors. Before long, Anderson, Chipman, O'Neill, and Jenness sent a strong note to Charles Stewart, Minister of the Interior, protesting the allegations in The Friendly Arctic which, they claimed injured their "personal honour" and professional reputations, and demanded that a formal investigation look into the matter. To make certain that their petition would not be swept under the carpet, as their last protestations had been, they made sure their story reached the ears of the press. But it was really to no avail for, as Stefansson himself well knew by this time, no one


\[51\] Ottawa Morning Journal, 8 March 1922.
wanted the dirty linen of the past paraded before the public.\textsuperscript{52} If anything, the actions of Stefansson's opponents—although designed to force the government's hand—may have infuriated the government, for Anderson and his cohorts were sat upon rather heavily by their minister, Charles Stewart, who told them to return to their proper duties.\textsuperscript{53} According to Mrs. Anderson, the only reason Stewart gave for not granting an inquiry was that "it was an impossible situation for two government departments to engage in a fight with one another. Stefansson is shrewd. Isn't he shrewd."\textsuperscript{54} She may well have been right.

The only way left to assail Stefansson had been to attack him in the scholarly press, particularly through the respected journal \textit{Science}.\textsuperscript{55} The new round began in July of 1922 of that same year with the appearance of a long letter by Jenness in \textit{Science} disputing many of the allegations made

\textsuperscript{52} E.g. PAC, RG42, 84-2<29/vol. 5, Desbarats to VS, [telegram], 20 January 1922; SC, WIMF, Camsell to VS, 23 January 1922; Mr. McGregor [private secretary to Mackenzie King] to VS, 18 February 1922.

\textsuperscript{53} PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Memorandum of interview of 16 March 1922, between Charles Stewart, Charles Camsell, Rudolph Anderson, K.G. Chipman, D. Jenness, 21 March 1922.

\textsuperscript{54} PAC, Crawford Papers, MG30, C49, vol. 2, Mrs. Anderson to Mrs. J.T. Crawford, 4 June 1925.

\textsuperscript{55} PAC, RG45, 4078C/57, Camsell to Brock, 16 April 1923.
in *The Friendly Arctic*. The letter, of course, put the Southern Section in the best possible light, centring around the problem of whether Stefansson was in complete command of both Sections, or whether the Southern Section had been created as a separate entity. In addition, using some documentary evidence, Jenness was able to cast doubt on Stefansson's ability to live off the country. If he had had Stefansson's own diaries, Jenness could have made a more convincing expose. Jenness, it must be said, was very astute in his own "doctorings" of the official instructions of 1913. Although he did not alter them, the text of the instructions as he related them, were made up of three different paragraphs which, in the original document, were separated by pages of instruction. Yet the sentences selected when gathered together gave a different impression to that which they conveyed when read with the rest of the instructions. Jenness letter as written cast doubt on Stefansson being made supreme commander.

Although other individuals attacked Stefansson in one

---

56 D. Jenness, "The Friendly Arctic", [Published by permission of the Deputy Minister of Mines, Ottawa], *Science*, LVI (7 July 1922), pp. 8-12.
fashion or another, in other scholarly journals, 57Jenness', article was the one which infuriated Stefansson most and made their relationship tense and full of mutual suspicion. Stefansson was so upset he had a local lawyer write a threatening letter to Jenness, which the latter ignored. 58Stefansson's reaction to the article so delighted his detractors that they could confidently assert that they were "perfectly satisfied"

57 Stefansson's explorations, discoveries, and techniques of observation were lauded by F.A. McDiarmid of Canada's Geodetic Survey in "Geographical Determinations of the Canadian Arctic Expedition," Geographical Journal [Royal Geographical Society], LXII (October, 1923), pp. 293-302. McDiarmid's contentions were questioned by James White, formerly Chief Geographer to the Canadian government, in the June, 1924, issue of the Geographical Journal, and followed his attack up with a longer memorandum in April, 1925. Essentially, White contended that some of Stefansson's "discoveries" had been on older charts and that Stefansson's statements concerning the charting of Banks Land were incorrect. The editors of the Journal, however, were disinclined to accept White's arguments and gave the benefit of the doubt to Stefansson. J.H. White, "The Geographical Work of the Canadian Arctic Expedition," Geographical Journal, LXIII (June, 1924), pp. 508-11. "The Geographical Work of the Canadian Arctic Expedition," Geographical Journal, LXV (April, 1925), pp. 340-42. It was not until 1946, however, that Stefansson's discoveries were corroborated by aerial surveys. M. Dunbar and K.R. Greenaway, Arctic Canada From the Air, (Ottawa, 1956), pp. 8, 27, 195-96, 221, 236, 238, 244, 357, 362, 383, 384, 400-01, 436, 437, 482. For many years, however, Stefansson's discoveries were allegedly called the "Tory Archipelago" during the Liberal administrations, because of the name he gave to his discoveries. Le Bourdais, p. 185.

58 PAC, RMA/15, Mrs. Anderson to William L. McKinlay, 21 September 1922.
that Stefansson had been answered appropriately. 59

Stefansson decided not to enter the fray, but he
let his own supporters carry on the cause. 60 It was a wise
move for although he had been wounded and his reputation
besmirched, he did gain some advantages. His enemies were
doing his job for him much better than he could—and he admitted
it. 61 Although it is difficult to say for certain, silence on
their part might have been golden for the members of the
Southern Section. Their actions may have blown Stefansson's
prominence all out of proportion, at least in Canada. The
Friendly Arctic was not a best seller in Canada or Great
Britain, although one can be sure the controversy generated
after its publication may have helped its sales. "The City
of Cleveland alone has bought more of my books than all the
British territories put together," lamented Stefansson to
Stephen Leacock. 62 If anything, then, the actions of the former

59
Ibid.

60 E.G. Stefansson's friend, William H. Hobbs, of the
Department of Geology, University of Michigan, reviewed The
Friendly Arctic in The Journal of Geology, XXXI (February-
March, 1923), pp. 154-58. In fact, of all the reviews of
the book, Hobbs' is the most partial, denigrating Jenness'
aspersions on "this ultra-modest explorer", Stefansson.
Ibid., p. 154; also, Burt McConnell and Harold Noice, "The
Friendly Arctic", Science, LVII (30 March 1923), pp. 368-73.

61 PAC, Camsell Papers, VS to Camsell, 20 November 1922.

62 SC, General-1922 file, VS to Stephen Leacock, 18
December 1922.
members of the Southern Section did not damage his prestige. They helped promote it, instead, and in the process they became doubly infuriated. With international attention focusing more and more on Stefansson and the Wrangel Island business, which had not met disaster as yet, every little scrap of publicity helped. Rather than being harmed at this particular juncture, Stefansson was being popularized.

But now it was Stefansson's turn to take the offensive, not against Anderson, who really posed no threat to him now, but against Diamond Jenness, a fellow anthropologist. Jenness had caused some concern with his rebuttal in Science, but he now posed a greater threat to Stefansson. In his pending final report on the physical characteristics of the Copper Eskimos, Jenness once again severely took his former "commander" to task, questioning not only his conclusions, but his methodology and his basic truthfulness about their location as outlined in My Life With the Eskimo. 63 The Southern Section's

attacks on him were of no consequence, because no formal inquiry would ever be established to air the men's grievances. But Jenness was another matter, for he worked in a field where Stefansson had some claim to competence. Stefansson's international scientific reputation in matters of ethnology, the reputation he cherished most, was now at stake, although Stefansson claimed his main concern was to head off another controversy from reaching the official level and thereby lowering the work of the expedition in the esteem of worldwide scientific circles. He could ignore attacks on his proficiency in scientific areas such as geography and oceanography, but this was the absolute limit. Stefansson's opposition in this case was quite serious for it might have wrecked the entire series of publications.

This, rather than the squabbling between two scientists of decided views, was the significant issue. The Deputy Minister of Mines, Camsell, was informed that Desbarats, Deputy Minister of Marine, was tempted to stop the funding for the publication of the reports "in view of the controversy being carried on...." Stefansson insisted that Jenness was determined to carry on the fight in the official report. The

---

64 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Memo re "[Telephone] Call from V. Stefansson and Dr. Prince" to Camsell; 7 April 1923. Dr. E.E. Prince was Dominion Commissioner of Fisheries, a member of the Arctic Biological Committee which oversaw the publication of the Reports, and a supporter of Stefansson.

65 Ibid.
ethnologist, who had been used to criticism, feared that such views finding their way into official publications might give them the stamp of authority. Unless certain passages in the report were revised, Stefansson announced he was ready to charge Jenness with "deliberate misrepresentation". Stefansson was even willing to let Jenness question his theory concerning the white origins of the Copper Eskimos, so long as this was done in a "truthful and legitimate way", i.e. as long as Jenness admitted that his forays in the Copper Eskimo country were not so intensive as Stefansson's had been and that since he did not see the Prince Albert Sound Eskimos his generalizations could not be so absolute.

Jenness refused to back down, and was incensed that Stefansson had been allowed to see his report before it was published, when the explorer had no legal or moral authority to do so. Jenness asserted: "Mr. Stefansson spent about six weeks among the Copper Eskimo and met about forty percent of their number. I spent upward of 18 months and saw 70%. To insert the statement asked for by Mr. Stefansson would be a direct untruth." Not only that, but such a statement...

---

66 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, VS to Camsembl, 18 April 1923.

67 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57. Memo re "[Telephone] Call" from Stefansson and Prince to Camsembl, 7 April 1923.

68 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Memo of Diamond Jenness re "Account of Call from Mr. V. Stefansson and Dr. Prince" to Jenness, 7 April 1923.

69 Ibid.
would undermine Jenness' contention regarding the possible origin of this native group, and would give Stefansson's original hypothesis as much seeming validity as his own. Jenness was no fool. To admit anything else would downgrade his own conclusions.

If Jenness would not revise or eliminate some of his remarks, Stefansson insisted on his right to reply in his own report. But by now such threats were not given serious attention by the Geological Survey. They may have gained the impression that Stefansson would never complete his end of the bargain; in any case he could be kept at bay by not being given a chance to get in the last word if he wanted. The device was simple enough: to hold off the publication of the narrative of the Southern Section. Anderson had indicated he was not averse to this. Besides, with the rebuttal in Science, and now Jenness' report being published under official auspices, what more could he ask for? The narratives were of secondary importance to the Geological Survey as compared with some of the scientific reports. Stefansson could not be permitted to get in the last word because Anderson refused to supply the second-to-last word. Although one cannot document

---

70 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Prince to Camsell, 19 April 1923.

71 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Anderson to Camsell, 24 April 1923.
such a position, it is a highly likely and astute manoeuvre--
and quite convenient from Anderson's point of view. In any
case, the waiting game began and outlasted Stefansson. No
changes would be made in Jenness' Report.\textsuperscript{72}

Stefansson, however, was determined to get the last
word and promised that it would be "a very vicious last word",
but he would never be given the opportunity. The Geological
Survey was confident that his flickering star would be
extinguished. Stefansson, indeed, was "hurting" to use his
own words, and indicating his desire for a truce.\textsuperscript{73}But it was
too late, for Stefansson was not a man to be worried about.

As time went on, Stefansson ceased to feel any partic-
cular obligation to the Canadian government to see the
project through, in light of the abuse being hurled at him in
Parliament after the Wrangel Island affair, and his having
served faithfully in the Arctic for eleven years without
salary.\textsuperscript{74}The other publications went forward while the govern-
ment continued to plead with Stefansson to be reasonable and
and let bygones be bygones for the sake of the general reading
public, for he could well afford to be "magnanimous towards
detractors."\textsuperscript{75}Stefansson would not budge, though by now he

\textsuperscript{72}PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Camsell to Prince, 26
April 1926.

\textsuperscript{73}PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, VS to Camsell, 5 May 1923,

\textsuperscript{74}PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 6, VS to McVeigh, 3 January
1924.

\textsuperscript{75}PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol. 6, McVeigh to VS, 8 January
1924.
considered it might be wiser "to get some impartial historian to write the story of the expedition on the basis of the documents." By 1925 the government considered it "quite useless" to take the matter any further, and resigned itself to the fact that neither Stefansson nor Anderson would publish the official narratives; Stefansson because he insisted on having the last word, and Anderson because he was lazy, did not want to play Stefansson's game and probably wished to do nothing which might provide fuel for future publicity and wrangling.

It is true, though, that Stefansson, in 1931, (when a different government was in power in Ottawa) had the temerity to suggest he would undertake the project if the government would "make a definite grant for this purpose" seeing that he, unlike Anderson and the other scientists, had to earn his living "without salary or support from anybody." But it was now too late; his cry of self-support fell on deaf ears and his suggestion was rejected utterly, and quite rightly so.

\[\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-29/vol, 6, VS to McVeigh, 3 February 1924.}\]

\[\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-28, McVeigh to William L. McKinlay, 22 April 1925.}\]

\[\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-11/vol, 2, VS to McVeigh, 4 February 1931.}\]

\[\text{PAC, RG42, 84-2-11/vol, 2, McVeigh to VS, 10 February 1931. By his own admission in 1921, Stefansson was earning between $20,000-30,000 a year, mainly from his lectures on the North. SC, 1920-26 file, VS to Deputy Minister of Finance, 6 January 1921. The explorer-lecturer pointed out that this was his just due for twelve years of unpaid service in the Arctic, and his refusal to take a salary. That had been}\]
Stefansson's official narrative was never published, and the Department of the Naval Service had nothing to show for its efforts, unlike the mass of Geological Survey expedition reports—except for a black-bordered notice which only appeared once, ironically enough in Jenness' volume on the Copper Eskimo:

This volume is one of a series of reports dealing with the results of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18 which was led by Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson under the direction of the Department of the Naval Service. The Geological Survey of the Department of Mines was also interested in the expedition, sending several specialists with it, and is issuing part of the technical volumes of the series of reports. Copies of this volume, paper-bound, may be obtained for fifty cents apiece from the Department of the Naval Service, Ottawa.

Hardly worth the effort.

his own choice, for Stefansson had speculated on the long term returns and the freedom of action that had accompanied his unsalaried position. It is likely that Ottawa officials in 1931 would assume that nothing drastically had changed in Stefansson's financial position. Besides, why should the Canadian government subsidize an individual who had been so successful in the past because of opportunities afforded by the same agency?

Stefansson's days in the halls of power were numbered. Ottawa did not think it worth sacrificing good, loyal men to appease an individual whose personality and manoeuvrings were becoming a nuisance. Stefansson had to go. By this time Stefansson had not only incurred the wrath of the Geological Survey, whose alienation was deep-seated, but also the displeasure of those groups which had for so long been his main support—the government and the politicians. He made a hasty and quiet retreat.

Yet even when he tried to get away from it all by going to Australia after the Wrangel Island misadventure, his critics there, emboldened by his fall, carried on:

"Our Friend Stefansson"

Canadian literature that has drifted my way suggests that our late visitor Stefansson is a many sided man. I would call him nothing less than an Hexagon, and he may even be an irregular crystal. The latest addition to my collection is an article cut from a Toronto paper. It deals with the wanderer's explorations in the deserts of Australia, he having gone there to disperse the illusion that there really [are] "deserts". A misty impression is left that he succeeded, and this Australian [mystery] is now cleared up in some way like the sources of the Nile. It is added that Stefansson hopes to go to the African Sahara and put it likewise in a new light which nobody has heard of before. 81

81 CP, The Bulletin, Sydney, Australia, 16 April 1925.
According to R.W. Brock, under whose leadership the original Southern Section was planned and who now was a dean at the University of British Columbia, the whole situation had grown lamentable:

...my feeling is the same as yours [i.e. Camsell], I do not suppose that there ever was a polar expedition out any length of time, that did not have this sort of row. The difference is that in almost all cases, when they got out they returned to normal, laugh and forget and stand up for each other. This case is the exception to the rule, and is damaging to all concerned.

No good to anybody, but only harm to all concerned, will result in pursuing the matter further. It has gone too far already. No one is interested except the principals, and they have each had their say and gotten in their blows. Let it go at that. I do not think for the personal vanity or private satisfaction of one or a few individuals, the officials or any others should be dragged into this dirty mess, or that the country should be put to the unnecessary expense of an investigation. In the end, the individuals, the parties and the expedition will be judged on one thing only and that is the scientific results they present to the public.

The squabble has taken up far too much of their time and has been given too much publicity already.

I am perfectly clear as to the instructions to Stefansson and the Southern party. They have both been right on some points and wrong on others. That is one main reason why no good can come to anyone pursuing the matter. Some dirt will stick to each one of them. So far as any outsider takes any interest in the matter his sympathies will incline to one side or the other as it does now, but the main reaction will be, what it has been with both you and me, annoyance with the lot. "A plague on both your Houses." There may be something to be said against Stefansson—-but I can vouch for this in his favour, when he got back he wished to make up with Dr. Anderson and to be fair with him and let bygones be bygones. I know that from the earnest way he asked for my assistance to bring it about.
His references to the trouble in the Friendly Arctic were unfortunate, but [Stefansson] had been goaded to the explosion point. However, he still desired to be fair, for he tried to get the manuscript to me to look over. Unfortunately I was out of reach…. Had I seen it, I know he would have accepted my alterations, which would have been satisfactory to all concerned.

If there was anything to be gained by continuing the controversy, if anyone needed vindicating, or if there were an official inquiry, I would be forced to break silence. But such is not the case. Because a few dogs insist on fighting, it is not incumbent on every cur in town to get into the scrap.82

Brock's assessment may have been a fair one, but, living so far from the main event, he could indulge in such luxury. To the men in Ottawa, however, there existed a real and practical problem: how to resolve the issue. Government officials, particularly those of the Geological Survey, also were anxious to end the squabble, but Camsell believed this would be impossible: "I am anxious as anyone to avoid any controversy … but from my recent experience I am inclined to think that Mr. Stefansson is not inclined in the same way. It is regrettable that these differences will continue to rise, but we have no control over Mr. Stefansson's actions."83 If anyone had to go, Camsell's tone suggests that it was Stefansson who was the expendable item.

* * *

82 PAC, RG45, file 4078C/57, Brock to Camsell, 24 April 1923.

83 Ibid., Camsell to E.E. Prince, 26 April 1923.
Stefansson was in trouble both with both the Geological Survey and the Canadian government in the spring of 1923. By the autumn of the same year he had been placed in a very uncomfortable position, to say the least, with the news of the Wrangel Island tragedy. Although he was not present in Ottawa for more than a few days at a time, by now even his spirit was being exorcised from the capital.

With the Wrangel Island fiasco, the mud-slinging campaign against him, by Mrs. Anderson in particular, began in earnest. Throughout the fall of 1923 and the spring of 1924 she was pouring out her frenzied and paranoid invective in letters to Mrs. Crawford, mother of the young Allan Crawford who had lost his life in the service of the Stefansson Arctic Development Company. 84 Previously, such points of view had only been spread by word of mouth in the closed civil service circle of Ottawa, but now the whispering campaign reached out to other areas--fuel for a closely-knit hate-Stefansson club. Some of the rumours could never be substantiated, but intermingled with them were elements of truth which could only tarnish Stefansson's reputation. Even had they been untrue, the important fact that they were being spread and that many people by now were receptive, were sufficient in

84 See, PAC, Crawford Papers, 1923-24.
themselves. Ottawa was told that Stefansson was a reprehensible, publicity-seeking liar, plagiarist, a rebel and cheat who was expelled from Harvard for selling examinations to the students he was tutoring; he was a man who turned on those, especially missionaries, who had befriended him, a man with no scientific training or disposition, a man who deserted his Eskimo wife, Pannigabluk, whom he exploited for copy, and an Eskimo son, Alec. 85

Rudolph Anderson carried on in very similar fashion but on a more subdued key. 86 The Andersons' crusade continued well into the 1950's; they collected clippings on Stefansson and his activities, and disseminated such material, along with comments, to intimates and associates within the government employ and elsewhere. In the long run such a sustained campaign in all probability did very little but place the Andersons and their cohorts in humourously unpleasant light. As far as can be ascertained, nothing came of their efforts, and by 1952 even Mrs. Crawford was tired of the whole affair.

85 E.G., PAC, Crawford Papers, Mrs. Anderson to Mrs. Crawford, 20 January, 19 March, 21 March 1924. Stefansson never acknowledged his relationship with Pannigabluk, but it was common knowledge in the Arctic. See, Georgina Stefansson, "My Grandfather, Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson," North, VIII, no. 4 (July-August, 1961), p. 25.

86 E.G., PAC, RMA/5, Anderson to Mrs. Crawford, 2 April 1924.
simply because it had come to naught. 87

The reasons for the long and bitter Anderson campaign are obscure but their efforts were redundant and quite unnecessary. Le Bourdais maintained that the Anderson-Stefansson controversy was the "Feud that Froze the Arctic" 88 which paralyzed the Canadian government, making it unable to continue its northern programme of exploration and interest in the northern latitudes. Yet this is not true. The Canadian government had, by the mid-1920's, cooled toward Stefansson for other reasons than Anderson's hostility. Too many other parts of government had been alienated, 89 and Stefansson never

87 Mrs. Crawford complained bitterly to the Andersons that while she and her husband had abided by Anderson's advice to give Stefansson "enough rope and he will hang himself", and had faithfully copied documents pertaining to Stefansson and given them to Anderson, nothing had come of them. The Crawfords had become suspicious of Anderson's silence, and Mrs. Crawford admitted that by then she could not tell the truth from the falsehoods. Anderson's reluctance, she surmised, must mean there was some truth in Stefansson's position. She was noticeably distressed upon receiving news that an Arctic island had been named after Stefansson. None of this would have happened if Anderson had forthrightly published the other side of the story--if there really had been one. PAC, RMA/19, Mrs. Crawford to Mrs. Anderson, 9 March 1952.


89 The alienation went as far as the Arctic. Not only were the missionaries upset by Stefansson's condemnations, but most of the R.C.M.P. in the North did not have a good word to say about the man. They were upset by his occasional maligning of the Force, and for a time were also worried because Stefansson had, in his short-term extravagance with government funds, set the natives' wage scale too high and disrupted the northern economy. These views were shared by at least one Arctic tourist/traveller, who was in the region in the 1920's. See, C.C. Vyvyan, Arctic Adventure, (London, 1961), pp. 52, 71, 132.
again received the trust, respect and influence he had generated in his earlier relations with Ottawa officialdom. It was more important to close ranks rather than occasion interdepartment conflicts, and cause dissatisfaction and wounds to government servants.

From 1924 until his death in 1962, Stefansson's connection with Canadian affairs was relatively obscure, though his lecture tours occasionally brought him before Canadian audiences. His many later Arctic-related endeavours were carried on in the United States but received little notice in Canada. Ottawa tolerated him, but did not entrust him with any information that might even in the slightest embarrass the Canadian government. For example, Major General J.H. MacBrien, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, supplied Stefansson with some information in 1933, namely the Force's efficiency in cold climate. Stefansson was taking up the cudgel against Ellsworth Huntington's theory that cold is a noticeable handicap to an individual or collective performance. Stefansson could not but disagree. The

---

90 See, Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 284-367. Only after Alvin Hamilton's and John Diefenbaker's "northern vision" did interest in the Arctic gain widespread momentum. In 1962, a few weeks before his death, Stefansson was interviewed for the National Film Board's "Arctic Circle" series.

91 Huntington's theory first appeared in Civilization and Climate (New Haven, 1915); Stefansson was taking issue with Huntington's article in Science, 17 February 1933.
Major General, at Stefansson's request,\textsuperscript{92} sent a questionnaire to his members of the Force asking for their opinions and personal experience,\textsuperscript{93} and sent the results to Stefansson. Much to MacBrien's consternation he was reprimanded even for this:

...as the information which you have collected and supplied to Mr. Stefansson was given without expectation of being published, permission to publish same should be withheld. The consensus of opinion [seems] to be that members of the Government Service should not be drawn into any controversy on this subject and that the views expressed by the Police officials represent their own personal outlook and were not based upon scientific observation.\textsuperscript{94}

Such caution was now the rule when dealing with Stefansson. When in 1938 he requested material for an article he was writing for \textit{Foreign Affairs} the director of one branch of the Department of Mines and Resources told his staff to beware:

You have read enough of Mr. Stefansson's material to be fully aware that his interests is primarily in advertising himself and that he has very little up-to-date knowledge about what is going on in the Canadian Arctic. Under the circumstances I think we should be very careful about what we send him.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{92}DIAND, 20-Stefansson, vol. 1, VS to MacBrien, 20 February 1933.

\textsuperscript{93}DIAND, 20-Stefansson, vol. 1, Questionnaire of Major General J.H. MacBrien, 25 February 1933.

\textsuperscript{94}DIAND, 20-Stefansson, vol. 1, H.H. Rowatt [on behalf of the Reindeer Committee] to MacBrien, 3 August 1933.

\textsuperscript{95}DIAND, 20-Stefansson, vol. 1, Director [illegible] to Mr. Cumming, [1938].
It seemed that, in the eyes of the government service, Stefansson could not be trusted. By the 1940's even his earlier work was being denigrated within Canadian government circles. United States officers apparently told interested parties in the Canadian government that Stefansson's *Arctic Manual* was sorely out of date. "Even women have been travelling around parts of the country that were the scenes of his early travels."96 If women could do that then what could one really say about Stefansson's exploits?--the innuendo is there. To their way of thinking, Stefansson had nothing to offer the Canadian government in terms of ideas or concepts. His new work was denigrated as being old hat: "The usual Stefansson theory of the Polar Mediterranean!" was all that could be mustered in assessing his *Arctic in Fact and Fable*.97 Obviously Stefansson was regarded by the Canadian government as an anachronism that should be politely but cautiously tolerated.

* * * *


Stefansson may not have realized the intensity and duration of the feeling against him in Ottawa official circles, although he knew by 1924 that his welcome there was gone and he wisely disengaged himself. The remainder of his long career was spent primarily in the United States, where he maintained his interest in northern affairs and other related matters. However, never again was he directly associated with any Canadian official projects—meagre as they were—although he did conduct Chatauquas on both sides of the border for a number of years. Stefansson never seemed to fully understand why he was being avoided by his "old Harvard friend Mackenzie King" or other politicians and civil servants. 98 Forgetting the incidents that had embarrassed and sometimes mortified the Canadian government, he thought that the main reason for these snubs—aside from the lobbying of the "Anderson clique"—was the lack of interest displayed by Canadians toward the potentialities of their Arctic. 99

Stefansson had over-stepped himself in his postwar career in Ottawa as government advisor and northern propagandist, through underestimating the political realities within the Canadian bureaucracy. Descending on the capital after 1918 fresh with the plaudits and laurels for his exploratory feats from governmental and scientific agencies, Stefansson had assumed he could now get his own way in the formulation of

98 Stefansson, Discovery, pp. 296-97.

99 Ibid., p. 297.
government policies, no matter what, or who, was stepped on in the process. His failure to gain membership in Ottawa's prestigious Rideau Club in 1921, soon after the Order-in-Council expressing the nation's thanks, was some indication that not all of those who counted were enamoured with his efforts—even though Stefansson was nominated by Sir Robert Borden and seconded by Edgar N. Rhodes, Speaker of the House of Commons.

In the matter of publishing the official reports, for instance, he had even let down his prime supporter, Desbarats, of the Naval Services. The feud between the Naval Service and the Geological Survey appeared to be the price that had to be paid if Stefansson were to remain. There was little that could be done by Ottawa beyond refusing to co-operate with him, for Stefansson was not a government employee. This meant

100 Stefansson was black-balled in early March, 1921, a few days after Meighen had told him that the government would not support the Wrangel Island venture and also scrapped its plans for another expedition either under Stefansson or Shackleton. There were no fewer than 67 negative votes. The adverse vote was a real shock to Borden and Rhodes, not to mention Stefansson. SC, 1920-26 file, Rhodes to VS, 16 March 1921; Borden to VS, 17 March 1921. It is not entirely clear as to what had happened. Le Bourdais, p. 148, claimed that it was Stefansson's enemies, meaning the Anderson faction, but Anderson does not seem to have been that powerful. In fact, in a private letter Anderson suggests that Shackleton, who had been denied command of the next Arctic expedition, and his Ottawa supporters were behind the scheme to scuttle Stefansson's membership. PAC, RMA/4, Anderson to R. Bartlett, 19 November 1921.
that he was free to bait members of the Geological Survey, then sit back and watch them howl until they were told by their superiors to behave themselves. Amusing for Stefansson, who may have been goaded into making public his interpretation of the events of 1913-18, but not for those whose hands were tied. If this state of affairs continued the government might lose the trust of individuals who had just as much as Stefansson to contribute to the general knowledge of the Arctic.

There was no deliberate government policy to ostracize Stefansson but as Stefansson became more arrogant in his demands and activities in Ottawa between 1918 and 1923, it became plain that government co-operation with him must be predicated on Stefansson's toning down his manner and softening his posture. It was not in Stefansson's nature to retreat, or to subordinate himself to others, so what must be done now was obvious to him: forsake his Canadian career.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Vilhjalmur Stefansson left an impressive legacy to North America and the scientific world. He was an explorer of world-wide renown whose continuing fame will rest upon his spectacular, single-handed endeavours in the Canadian Arctic. Stefansson's discoveries added almost all the last major land masses to the map of the New World, bringing to full circle a process his Viking ancestors had begun almost a thousand years before. Stefansson had brought to Canada more interest in the Arctic than any other individual of his time. Moreover, as some have claimed his greatest achievement was his demonstration that scientific work could be carried on "without the traditional tragedy or suffering."\(^1\) Stefansson's success in the North, we are told, inspired young men in all countries to explore the unknown Arctic reaches.\(^2\)

---


\(^2\)Ibid.
Stefansson's books, despite their exaggerations and shortcomings, remain exciting testimonies to his Canadian career, for their scope goes far beyond the mere record of exploration and reveals a far-ranging, ever-inquiring mind. Not only was he controversial and provocative, but in many respects he was correct before his time. The polar "great circle" routes of today's major international airlines, the spectacle of nuclear submarines surfacing at the North Pole, and the possibilities of using gigantic submarine tankers to transport the untapped riches of the Arctic archipelago, all had their origin in Stefansson's polar Mediterranean, his brilliant concept of a commercial empire of the Canadian North. His books, more than his compelling lectures, can instill in their readers, Canadian or otherwise, a sense of romance and imagination about the lands and prospects of Canada's higher latitudes, for Stefansson's writings added a new and vigorous element, the Arctic, to what is a traditional and persistent Canadian theme: "The True North Strong and Free."  

But granting all of these, this thesis has concerned itself with other aspects of Stefansson's Canadian career.

This thesis has attempted to answer the queries outlined in the "Introduction" about Stefansson the man, and the people and governments with which he was associated.

Inevitably, the problems are inextricably bound up with each other, but they should be repeated here. Were Stefansson's characteristics of personality acquired in the frontier of the American mid-West, and was he a product of his frontier environment? What methods and techniques did he use to gain public prominence, and the trust of scientific agencies and government institutions? How did he use his position once he had "arrived"? How did he influence the Canadian government's attitude towards Canada's northern reaches? Why did Stefansson "fall from grace" in the eyes of Canadian authorities? Was it owing to the alienation of his one-time friend Rudolph Anderson, or did Stefansson contribute largely to the outcome? Or was the problem a wider one related to governmental objectives? Did his success in Canada depend on the approaches of successive prime ministers and governments toward the place of the North? Were later government efforts in the North based on Stefansson's ideas? Perhaps this final chapter can answer these issues found in Stefansson's Canadian career--or at least make certain observations on them.

In part, this thesis has been the study of a man who tried to follow the precepts of what has been termed, Social Darwinism, in his own career. Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, which Stefansson encountered in college, only added muscle to an already deep conviction held by the young man, for he had
imbibed such notions and characteristics as an adolescent in North Dakota. Yet he was not a "frontier man" in the Turnerian sense, if there ever was one. True, Stefansson was aggressive, inquisitive, and had an inventive turn of mind; moreover, he exhibited an ebullient energy and dominant individualism which could effect great ends. But these are characteristics that can be ascribed to any dynamic individual and are certainly not exclusively the consequence of living in a frontier environment. These traits in Stefansson were the necessary ingredients for achieving his consuming ambition to win personal fame and glory.

Stefansson's experiences in the Canadian North, sometimes self-exaggerated and self-deceiving, reinforced his rather simplistic conviction that to succeed, to be great, he must live by his wits and be ready to meet all challenges. Once a person had committed himself to any task he had to be successful at all costs, even on occasion resorting to questionable methods. Life he regarded, and often spoke of, as a "game"—or, more correctly, a succession of games that had to be played to the full and taken to victory. This, perhaps, is the central theme of Stefansson's Canadian career which manifested itself after the 1908-12 Expedition. As long as the man used his innate talents to the full—and Stefansson realized early that he was made of the right "stuff"—he was bound to achieve his goal handsomely. Even if he lacked the requisite training, or, for that matter, the essential information, he still could rise above the ordinary. He mastered
the technique of seizing every opportunity to advance himself along the ladder of success. In a way his career was like mounting a set of building blocks, for Stefansson was able, step by step, to cultivate the right men in the right places, improving his status from the unknown, inexperienced ethnologist, to the respected and influential Arctic explorer, to the advisor of governments and theorist of international stature. One must remember, too, that Stefansson was not alone in his ambitions for self-fulfillment, for he lived in an age where fame and rags-to-riches stories were part of the American ethos. Like many of his peers he was convinced such aspirations were no more than natural, the correct thing to do. In the eyes of many, however, the brash attitude that accompanied his efforts to realize his potential only sullied his aspirations and lowered him in their esteem.

Having been wounded and poorly treated by the Anglo-American Polar Expedition, Stefansson was determined to be his own master, and began learning the finer points of how to conduct an Arctic expedition of his own making. All enterprises—and Arctic expeditions above all—must have adequate sponsorship, meaning an intensive promotional campaign to attract public interest and the requisite financial backing. By gaining the support of people who counted in Canada and the United States, and by presenting them with a promising ethnological objective—the little-known Eskimos of Coronation Gulf—and the novel, inexpensive, method of exploration,
living off the country as far as possible--Stefansson was able to gain the ear of the American Museum of Natural History and the Geological Survey of Canada. Ultimately, the latter connection was to be his entering wedge into close dealings with the Canadian government.

In some ways, the Expedition of 1908-12 did Stefansson more harm than good. He did some very excellent ethnological work amongst the Copper Eskimos, but his stubborn determination to stay in the field until he had proved himself, even after the American Museum had withdrawn its support, was to prove a bad precedent. The Museum's recantation after the news of his discovery of the Copper Eskimos, convinced him that a good press was the secret for keeping an expedition going. The force of publicity attached to his discovery of the people of Coronation Gulf could and did change his American sponsor's mind. Publicity became to Stefansson the key, or at least a short cut, to success for it helped him to achieve instant world notice and paved the way for another expedition.

In seeking support for that next expedition which was to become the 1913-18 Expedition, ethnological pursuits, which Stefansson wanted to continue, became secondary by force of circumstance; a reduced priority for his own scientific work specialty was the price he had to pay in his eagerness to command a first-class, amply-financed expedition. He succeeded beyond his expectations, interesting the Canadian government to support the entire enterprise. He had whetted Prime Minister Borden's appetite to send a fairly impressive expedition to
the Arctic, that continued and intensified the Canadian government's northern programme.

Yet, although the Expedition of 1913-18 was to be Stefansson's most famous, it was replete with hostilities and misunderstandings, which were not all of Stefansson's doing. R.M. Anderson believed that it was his duty to thwart Stefansson, even to the point of misusing his own authority. Despite his feats of exploration and the excellent work of the Southern Party, Stefansson's determination and his fear that the Expedition would not be a public success, forced him into questionable tactics. In so doing he gained the undying hostility of the personnel of the Geological Survey in the North and afterwards in Ottawa.

Stefansson was not deterred, though, by what he considered as minor setbacks, and he looked beyond exploration for new vehicles to achieve further greatness. He hoped to put to practical use some of the findings and theories arising from his northern experience. His earlier exploits, pioneering efforts, sheer brute perseverance, and his contacts with some of the most influential men in North America, opened up new vistas for himself, and, he hoped, for Canada too.

His endeavours to promote interest in the Canadian North were commendable, but in retrospect they appear to have been quite premature and therefore, unrealistic. The methods Stefansson confidently employed led many to believe he was a charlatan, yet, he honestly believed that he was nothing of
the sort. Ambition and drive had made him a success, but, whether Stefansson wished it or not, success inescapably carries power and influence with it. If not used astutely or responsibly, power in the Actonian sense, and an overweening urge to be great, can debase an individual's finer qualities, as it has so many great men of history. To some extent, this also happened to Stefansson as can be frequently seen in his correspondence and diaries, especially for the period 1913 to 1923.

In the process, Stefansson became less of a scientist, in the strict sense, and more a publicist and promoter. In his haste he was prone to be superficial in his scientific work and observations, leaving the spadework, "details" and finer points to others. Some inner undefined faith told him that a true genius need not concern himself about detail and mundane day-to-day matters. Once a logical theory or argument was put forth and accepted, the trivial aspects, the details, would naturally take care of themselves. Pure reason, intuition and vigour would overcome any form of resistance. This process can be seen at work in the 1913-18 Expedition, the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company, and the Wrangel Island incident. The last two, particularly, were unsuccessful and cast doubt on Stefansson's credibility, for both were based on insufficient data and evidence and were complicated by his impetuosity. Stefansson always claimed he was in pursuit of the truth through scientific investigation, but, as this thesis indicates, when he forsook pure scientific pursuits,
the truth sometimes suffered. He appeared oblivious to this metamorphosis.

Although Stefansson was a genius in many respects this study reveals he had many shortcomings when it came to dealing with others which was the case after 1912 when his career made him a "public" man. Throughout his Canadian career, he displayed a lack of tact, an insensitivity in understanding other people's point of view, and a poor ability at judging character. In the Expedition of 1913-18 he not only alienated people such as Anderson and Chipman who were on the "other side" of the main issue in dispute, but he placed trust and respect in persons--Storkerson and Wilkins for example--who had few kind things to say about their commander.

More important, Stefansson was politically naïve. He may have understood the political realities to which Canadian government responded, but his boundless faith told him he could overcome opposition even from this quarter. If he could get the leaders to stop and listen to his vision and logic, he felt sure he could help them mend the error of their ways.

He was clever, perhaps too clever, but also too naïve to survive in the Ottawa environment which ultimately rejected him. In Stefansson's view, Canadians were narrow-minded and had a beam in their eyes when it came to the Arctic; but he could not remove this blind spot. The undying hostility of the Andersons and the reaction of Ottawa officialdom to his methods and, to them, his overbearing attitude, were not
merely symptoms of narrow-mindedness. Civil servants and politicians were tired of being told they were fools all the time—and this was the message that came through Stefansson's public lectures and publications. Civil servants were tired of Stefansson's going over their heads to the top echelons of the Canadian government. They resented his intruding himself in important areas of policy-making with advice that was counter to their own. Politicians resented his efforts to force the pace when they were too cautious for his liking.

Perhaps the fundamental conflict was one of temperament. Stefansson's espousal of an American brand of individualism (helped by his own refusal to accept responsibility of civil service employment) may have produced a reaction on the part of many Canadian government officials to this alien way of getting things done. Stefansson wanted to involve the Canadian government in northern development, but it had to be in his way and on his terms. A country which traditionally had thus far handled its own pioneering endeavours and development following collectivist and statist approaches could not quite accommodate itself to his individualistic character. In a sense, Stefansson failed to understand this, and was unable to adjust his "style", developed from youth in the United States and later in the Canadian North, to the tone and outlook of Ottawa—especially that prevailing after 1921.
Stefansson's departure from Ottawa, after the Wrangel Island affair, signalled his failure to convert the Canadian government to his programme. Ottawa adopted a low-key approach to the North and the attendant problems of sovereignty and commercial development. Stefansson's "feud" with Anderson was not the singular cause which froze the Canadian Arctic as claimed by Le Bourdais. Many other factors led the Canadian government to follow a quiet approach to the effective occupation and gradual development of its northern regions. Plans for more scientific and exploratory expeditions were dropped for less grandiose, less expensive projects. To a degree, Stefansson's influence had been negative--it helped to alter these programmes, to stultify further expeditions for some years to come.

The Canada of the 1920's was too busy developing along other industrial and commercial fronts to be really concerned about the Arctic; other prospects, thrown open by the railway building boom of the pre-war years and the development of the power, forest, and mineral resources of the Shield in the 1920's and 1930's, were more lucrative. Today, it is quite evident that the Arctic could never be exploited employing ordinary standards developed in a more southern clime; more research than even Stefansson could have imagined is still necessary in understanding the unique problems of the Canadian North. With the Liberal government of Mackenzie King coming to power, Stefansson's ideas were out of joint with the main current of contemporary Canadian development. Borden and
Meighen, his former patrons, were no longer steering the Canadian ship of state, and by 1923 Stefansson had proved he could be an embarrassment and a source of trouble. Having caused a disconcerting international incident and having vexed a host of public servants in the Departments of External Affairs and the Interior, the Geological Survey, the National Museum, and the Prime Minister's office, Stefansson had to go. Otherwise, several branches of the Canadian bureaucracy would be impaired in their functions, and the trust of a number of loyal and diligent civil servants might be lost. They might not have been as intelligent and far-sighted, perhaps, as Stefansson, but in the long run, they were considered more vital. In trying to become a private policy adviser to Canadian governments, Stefansson simply took on more than the sum of his talents could manage.

The atmosphere of the United States was more congenial and could afford an environment more suited to Stefansson's aptitudes for education and publicity. There, he shifted his perspective from the Canadian North to the problems of polar regions in general and the American Far North, in particular, emphasizing the economic and strategic significance of Alaska in the American empire. In the process, he became probably the greatest expert in the United States on the Arctic.

In Canada, however, Stefansson would continue to be regarded with suspicion and aloofness in many quarters, without ever understanding why. Nevertheless, his explorations,
his ideas on Arctic development, and his attempts to promote the development of the Canadian North have given a significant, lasting place in Canadian history to Vilhjalmur Stefansson.
APPENDIX I

A Who's Who of the Canadian Arctic Expedition*


ANDERSON, Alexander. First officer on Karluk. After the Wreck of the Karluk, he was sent towards shore in command of a party that was lost on the ice.

ANDERSON, Rudolph M. Second-in-command of the expedition. Zoologist. Born American, but has since become naturalized Canadian. A graduate of and three years postgraduate study at the University of Iowa, and a member of the Geological Survey of Canada. He accompanied the author on his expedition of 1908-12. Four winters in the Arctic before beginning of his expedition.

ANDREASEN, Ole. Exploratory Party, 1914 and 1915.


BARKER, Charles. Second mate on the Karluk. Was a member of the first party sent towards shore after the Karluk sank. The party of four were lost on the ice before reaching Wrangel Island.


BERNARD, Peter. American citizen of Canadian birth (Prince Edward Island). Had followed sea around Nome for many years. Had been Captain and owner of the Mary Sachs before she was purchased by the expedition.

*From, Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pp. 758-764.
BEUCHAT, Henri. Anthropologist, of Paris. Studied at the Sorbonne and later attained distinction as a writer on American archeology and ethnology. He was lost on the ice near Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk.


BLUE, Daniel Wallace, Engineer of the Mary Sachs. Died at the Baillie Island, May 2, 1915.

BOLT, Ikey. Eskimo; Alaska and North Star, 1914, 1915.

BRADY, John. Sailor. Lost on the ice near Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk, while a member of the first shore-going party.

BREDDY, G. Fireman on the Karluk. Was a member of the party that reached Wrangel Island after the Karluk sank, but committed suicide there the summer of 1914.

BROOKS, Charles. Steward on Alaska. 1913.

CASTEL, Aarnout. Born in Holland and a graduate of a naval school there. Had been with whaling ships and was personally known to author since their meeting at Herschel Island, 1906. Master of North Star. Later in charge at Cape Kellett and Master of Challenge.

CHAFE, Ernest F. Messroom boy on the Karluk. A member of the party that reached Wrangel Island and among the survivors who were rescued the fall of 1914.

CHIPMAN, Kenneth Gordon. Topographer. A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and had had several years' experience in the topographical division of the Geological Survey of Canada.

COX, John Raffles. Assistant topographer. After graduating from McGill University, he had been a member of the topographical division of the Geological Survey of Canada. After the return of the Southern Section in 1916 he served in World War I.

CRAWFORD, J.R. Mary Sachs, 1913, and Exploratory Party, 1914 and 1915.

DONOHUE, Peter. Polar Bear, 1917.


GONZALES, Henry. Born in Portugal. He had been a whaler in Arctic for many years. Was First Officer of Polar Bear when she was purchased by the Expedition. Master
Polar Bear, 1915-17.

GUMAER, G.G. Accompanied Stokrson on exploratory trip of 1918.

HADLEY, John. Born at Canterbury, England. During a varied career he had been an officer in the Navies both of China and Chile. Petty Officer on the U.S. Revenue Cutter Thetis in 1889 when she went to Arctic to determine the location of Herschel Island. Had spent more than twenty-five years in the Arctic and personally known to author since 1908. Was member Karluk crew. Later Second Officer (1915-17) and Master (1917-18) of Polar Bear. Died in San Francisco of influenza, 1918.

HOFF, J.E. Engineer of Alaska, 1916.

ILLUN. Eskimo. Member of Polar Bear crew.

JENNESS, Diamond. Anthropologist. Rhodes Scholar at Oxford from New Zealand; before joining the expedition he had had field experience in ethnology in New Guinea. After the Southern Section returned south, he served in World War I.

JOHANSEN, Frits. Botanist and marine biologist. Born in Denmark. Had formerly been with Muylius Erichsen in East Greenland and had done entomological and other scientific work for the Department of Agriculture at Washington.

JONES, J.J. Engineer of the Polar Bear; died suddenly of heart disease, 1916.

KILIAN, Herman, Polar Bear, 1916 and 1917.

KILIAN, Martin. Polar Bear, 1916 and 1917; also Exploratory Party, 1918.

KING, A. Sailor. Was a member of the party that was lost on the ice while trying to reach Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk.


MACKAY, Alister Forbes. Surgeon of Scotland. Served in the British navy after graduation from the University of Edinburgh, and later accompanied Shackleton to the Antarctic. He was lost on the ice near Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk.
MCCONNELL, Burt M. Meteorologist. American. He accompanied the author ashore from the Karluk, and remained with the expedition during the winter of 1913-14. After severing his connection with the expedition, he went to Alaska and assisted in the rescue of the men from Wrangel Island. Later served in the War, in the United States Air Service.

MCKINLAY, William Laird. Magetician, of Scotland. After graduation from the University of Glasgow, was instructor in mathematics in Shawland's Academy of Glasgow, during spare time, assisted Dr. W.S. Bruce, of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory. After the sinking of the Karluk, he was among the survivors who were rescued from Wrangel Island. He returned to Scotland and served through most of the Great War.

MALLOCH, George S. Geologist. Had been a graduate student at Yale and was a member of the Geological Survey of Canada. He was an expert on coal deposits and stratigraphy generally. He died on Wrangel Island the spring of 1914 after the sinking of the Karluk.

MEMEN, Bjarne. Assistant to the Geologist (Mr. Malloch) of Christiania, Norway. He been with the Norwegian-Spitsbergen Expedition, and later had worked in the forests of British Columbia. He was a member of the party that reached Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk, but died there the spring of 1914.

MASIK, August. Mary Sachs, 1917, and Exploratory Party, 1918.

MAURER, Frederick W. A member of the party that reached Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk, and among the survivors who were rescued the fall of 1914.


MORRIS, S. Stanley. Sailor. Lost on the ice near Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk.

MURRAY, James. Oceanographer of Glasgow. Had worked for many years with Sir John Murray, one of the world's greatest oceanographers. He had been with Shackleton in the Antarctic and afterwards he had been biologist of the boundary survey of Colombia. He was lost on the ice near Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk.

NAHMENS, Otto. American. Had followed sea around Nome and had also been a miner there. Master of Alaska, 1913-14.

NATKUSIAK. Eskimo.


O'NEILL, John J. Geologist. Had specialized in pre-Cambrian geology and in copper-bearing rocks. A graduate of McGill University and later studied at Yale.

PEDERSEN, Theodore (C.T.) Born in Denmark, naturalized American. Had been whaler in Arctic waters about ten years. Selected Karluk as best available ship for expedition. Master of Karluk, 1913, on voyage San Francisco to Victoria, British Columbia, and in charge of her during repairing at Esquimalt Navy Yard. In 1914 as Master of Herman picked up Captain Bartlett at Emma Harbour and thus assisted in rescue of Karluk survivors.

SEYMOUR, William. Second officer of Polar Bear.


STEFANSSON, Vilhjalmur. Commander of the expedition, anthropologist, geographer. Graduate of the University of Iowa, three years post-graduate study at Harvard. Two previous arctic expeditions--1906-07 and 1908-12. Five winters in the Arctic before beginning of this expedition.

STORKERSON, Storker T. Born in north of Norway. Associated with author first when both were members of the Leffingwell-Mikkelsen Polar Expedition, 1906-07, where Storkerson was First Officer. Was for a time member of the Stefansson-Anderson Expedition of 1908-12. Had already lived in Arctic seven years before he joined the Canadian Arctic Expedition. Was ranking member of expedition after departure of Wilkins (1916). In charge ice drift, 1918.


TEMPLEMAN, Robert. Steward. A member of the party that reached Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk, and among the survivors who were rescued.


WILKINS, George H. Photographer of Australia. Studied at Adelaide University and before joining the expedition had been a photographic correspondent in the Balkan War. He returned south in 1916 and served with Australian flying forced during the two remaining years of the war. He was awarded the Military Cross and was promoted Captain.

WILLIAMS, H. Sailor. One of the survivors of the Karluk who were rescued from Wrangel Island the fall of 1914.

WILLIAMSON, Robert J. Second engineer on Karluk. A member of the party that reached Wrangel Island after the sinking of the Karluk, and one of the survivors who were rescued that fall.
APPENDIX II

A list of the witnesses who gave evidence at the hearings of the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission.*

Captain George Comer, Commander of whaling and other ships in the Arctic for over fifty years.

J.J. O'Neill, M.Sc., Ph.D., Geologist with Canadian Arctic Expedition three years in the north.

W.E.B. Hoare, C.E., Missionary, Church of England; four and a half years in Arctic.

Right Rev. Bishop Lucas, Missionary, Church of England; twenty-nine years in Arctic and sub-Arctic.

K.G. Chipman, S.B., Topographer, Canadian Arctic Expedition; five years in Arctic.

J.R. Cox, M.Sc., Topographer, Canadian Arctic Expedition; three years in Arctic.

Wm. McInnes, B.C., F.R.S.C., Directing Geologist, Canadian Geological Survey; several years in Canadian sub-Arctic.

Frits Johansen, Naturalist, Canadian Arctic Expedition; several years in Arctic, including 1906 to 1908 in Greenland.

Reverend William Peck, Missionary, Church of England; in Arctic from 1876 to 1918.

D. Jenness, M.Sc., Ethnologist, Canadian Arctic Expedition; six years in Arctic.

Right Rev. Bishop Stringer, Bishop and Missionary of Church of England; Twenty-six years in Arctic and sub-Arctic.

Dr. Alfred Thompson, M.P., represents the Yukon in House of Commons. Lived for many years in Yukon Territory.

*From, RD-MO Report, pp. 9-11.
C.C. Parker, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Ontario and Quebec.

Rev. W.H. Fry, Missionary, Church of England; ten years in Arctic.

Captain Mack, Superintendent of Transport for Hudson's Bay Company. Spent over eighteen years in Arctic.

Captain J.E. Bernier, Arctic Explorer, commanded two Canadian Arctic Expeditions.

Storker T. Storkerson, Commanded Ice Party under Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Canadian Arctic Expedition.

Frank C. Hennessey, accompanied Captain Bernier on two Canadian Arctic Expeditions.


G.E. Herriott, Topographer, Canadian Government Topographical Survey. Spent some time in northwestern Canada and Canadian sub-Arctic.

G.S. Macdonald, Topographer, Canadian Government Topographical Survey. Spent some time in northwestern Canada and Canadian sub-Arctic.

S.D. Fawcett, Topographer, Canadian Government Topographical Survey. Spent some time in northwestern Canada and Canadian sub-Arctic.

H.F. Lambart, Topographer, Canadian Government Topographical Survey. Spent some years in northwestern Canada and Canadian sub-Arctic.

Dr. E.M. Kindle, B.A., M.Sc., Ph.D., Palaeontologist, Canadian Arctic Expedition. Three years in Arctic.

J.B. Craig, B.A., B.Sc., Dominion Land Surveyor, engaged on Canadian Government Survey. Spent some time in Arctic and sub-Arctic.

B.W. MacLachlan, C.E., Engineer in charge of terminals Hudson Bay Railways, Port Nelson. Spent one and a half years on Hudson Bay.

Major Jas. McEvoy, M.E., Mining Engineer, formerly with Dominion Government Survey; Spent some time in northern British Columbia and Alberta, also in Hudson Bay country.

Right Rev. Bishop Reeve, Missionary, Church of England. Spent twenty-eight years in Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic.
James White, F.R.G.C. [sic?], Assistant to the Chairman, Canadian Commission of Conservation.

Rev. W.G. Walton, Missionary, Church of England, stationed at Fort George, James Bay. Thirty-eight years in Ungava.

Lt.-Col. C. Starnes, Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Spent some years in Yukon and in the Hudson Bay Company.

J. Burr Tyrrell, Arctic Explorer, formerly with Geological Survey of Canada. Since 1892 has spent a large portion of his time in Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic.


Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson, Geologist [sic], Canadian Arctic Expedition. Five years in Arctic. In command Southern Party, Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-16.
APPENDIX III

Success of the Alaskan Reindeer Project, 1891-1917.*

AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED, GROWTH, AND RESULTS OF INTRODUCTION OF REINDEER INTO ALASKA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First ten years (1893-1902)</th>
<th>Next five years (1902-1907)</th>
<th>Last eight years (1908-1915)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations</td>
<td>$133,000</td>
<td>$99,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$307,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of herds established</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of natives becoming owners of reindeer</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost to Government per owner of reindeer</td>
<td>$1,956</td>
<td>$1,763</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuation of same</td>
<td>$71,025</td>
<td>$89,125</td>
<td>$1,000,927</td>
<td>$1,167,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income received by natives</td>
<td>$44,500</td>
<td>$95,500</td>
<td>$350,470</td>
<td>$379,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuation of same</td>
<td>$204,175</td>
<td>$194,615</td>
<td>$3,080</td>
<td>$362,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WEALTH PRODUCED BY INTRODUCTION OF REINDEER IN ALASKA

- Valuation of 45,663 reindeer owned by natives in 1915 at $25 each                      $1,167,075
- Total income of natives from reindeer, 1893-1915                                    370,407
- Valuation of 33,945 reindeer owned by missions, Laplanders and other whites, and Government, 1915 589,000
- Total income of missions and Laplanders, and other whites, 1893-1915               107,361
- Total valuation and income, 1893-1915                                              $2,242,843
- Total Government appropriations, 1893-1915                                          307,000
- Gain (621 per cent)                                                                $1,935,843

The following table shows what a financial success this phase of Government enterprise has been during the 25 years since its inception—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valuation of 67,415 reindeer owned by natives in 1917, at $25 each</th>
<th>Total income of natives from reindeer, 1893-1917 (25 years)</th>
<th>Valuation of 41,141 reindeer owned by missions, Laplanders and other whites, and Government, 1917</th>
<th>Total income of missions and Laplanders, and other whites, from reindeer, 1893-1917</th>
<th>Total valuation and income, 1893-1917</th>
<th>Total Government appropriation, 1893-1917</th>
<th>Gain (926 per cent for 25 years, or an average annual gain of 37 per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,686,200</td>
<td>$508,350</td>
<td>$778,350</td>
<td>$214,443</td>
<td>$3,247,345</td>
<td>$317,000</td>
<td>$2,920,348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX IV

Recommendations of the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Commission*

(1) THAT steps be taken either by the use of aeroplanes or otherwise, to ascertain at the earliest possible date the approximate numbers of MUSK-OX still in existence in Northern Canada, and the localities in which they are to be found.

(2) THAT the policy of preventing any further slaughter of these animals, either by natives or by white men, except in case of dire necessity, be rigidly enforced.

(3) THAT a station be established in one of the northern islands, where musk-ox now exist and where young animals may be readily obtained for purposes of domestication, with a view to later bringing considerable numbers to some point further south and more readily accessible, at which their development from a national economic standpoint may be carried on and extended.

 Needless to say, the success of this undertaking will, from its inception, depend entirely on the personal and technical qualifications of those who may be entrusted with its management.

(4) THAT small experimental REINDEER herds be established in a number of such localities as may, after searching Departmental investigations, be found most desirable in points of vegetation and otherwise.

(5) THAT in the selection of the localities for these stations, the needs of the natives in the matter of food supply, be given the most careful consideration.

(6) THAT where suitable arrangements can be made, the various missionary bodies be requested to co-operate in an earnest effort to ensure the success of the undertaking, not only by influencing the natives to protect the animals, but also by encouraging them to learn how to handle and care for them, that, as in Alaska, they may become herders and eventually owners of herds.

*From, RD-MO Report, pp. 36-38.
This will involve the gradual working out of a system similar to that so successfully followed by the United States Government in Alaska, whereby small numbers of reindeer are given to the natives in recognition of the interest and industry which they show in the work.

(7) THAT at least one experienced Lapp deer-man should be detailed to each herd, this being necessary, not only to avoid mistakes in handling the deer, but to ensure that the instruction given to the natives is of a sound and practical character.

(8) THAT...a number of Lapp deer-men might be induced to come to Canada and bring their herds with them, steps to be taken at once to ascertain the exact conditions in that regard.

(9) THAT if these conditions are found to be as represented, negotiations be entered into immediately with the view of securing as many of these desirable people as possible, in order that their services may be utilized in the development of the reindeer industry in such areas as may be approved for that purpose.

Your commissioners do not feel that they would be justified in recommending at the present time, any definite policy with regard to the granting of further grazing leases to persons desirous of securing such concessions.

Your commissioners approved the grazing lease granted in 1920 to Mr. Vilhjamar [sic] Stefansson on Baffin island, because the local conditions as regards isolation are, in that case, such that it should be reasonably possible to enforce the limitations imposed by the lease with regard to the absorption of wild caribou in the reindeer herd.

Owing to the fact that on the mainland such enforcement would be quite impossible, especially in the case of large, and, therefore, only very partially domesticated reindeer herds, the reindeer would either become altogether wild, or the caribou, if not deliberately exploited for gain, be driven to seek other pastures, thus interfering with their regular, periodical migrations, and in all probability, causing them serious injury.

The granting of leases on Victoria island or Banks island would also involve the large herds of wild caribou which annually cross from the mainland, and many of which remain on these islands from year to year.

The information at the disposal of your commissioners is not sufficient to warrant them in expressing any opinion as to the feasibility of fencing off any of the peninsular areas on the northern portion of the mainland, so as to permit of their being leased for grazing
purposes without damage to the wild caribou.

In this connection it should be remembered that in those areas in Alaska to which the reindeer are brought the wild caribou had been previously almost altogether exterminated.

For the reasons above set forth, your commissioners would advise:—

(10) THAT great caution is exercised in the granting of grazing leases, and that no such leases be considered until after a most careful Department investigation of the local conditions and possibilities.

Altogether apart from the proposed introduction of domestic reindeer the vast herds of wild CARIBOU which undoubtedly still exist in the interior mainland area, repeatedly referred to in this report, constitute a valuable national asset, the importance of which, if properly dealt with, can be enormously enhanced, and your commissioners therefore respectfully recommend:—

(11) THAT an earnest effort be made to ascertain as soon as closely as possible the numbers and movements of the Barren Land caribou, especially those on the mainland and on the islands adjacent thereto; as also the numbers and movements of the caribou of other varieties, particularly those in the Yukon Territory and in northern British Columbia.

(12) THAT a comprehensive survey be made of the vegetation and other conditions having a bearing on the support of herbiverous animals in the interior areas, with the object of securing information as to the comparative value of the various districts for grazing purposes; the extent to which these natural pasture lands are now being used by the caribou; the approximate numbers of additional caribou or reindeer which might reasonably be expected to find sustenance in the different districts.

It will be obvious that in securing accurate and reliable data on these points, the migratory habits of the caribou and the length of time required to reproduce the reindeer moss after it has been eaten down, will have to be closely studied.

(13) THAT special attention be given to the enforcement of such regulations as will effectively prevent the wasteful or useless slaughter of the wild caribou, either by natives or others.

(14) THAT an intelligent and systematic campaign be inaugurated, having for its object the extermination of wolves, wolverines and such other animals as prey upon the caribou.
(15) THAT at each of the Reindeer Experimental Stations, the establishment of which is recommended herein, provision be made for the domestication, on intelligent lines, of such numbers of young wild caribou as may be conveniently handled with the reindeer herd.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

a) Archival Sources:

American Geographical Society, New York City.
Anglo-American Polar Expedition files.

American Museum of Natural History, New York City:
Files pertaining to Vilhjalmur Stefansson
Crockerland Files.

Chipman Papers, 85 Range Road, Ottawa.
Mr. Kenneth G. Chipman Correspondence and Diaries.

Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire,
Stefansson Collection:
Vilhjalmur Stefansson Correspondence and Diaries.
Other Diaries:
Ada Blackjack
Diamond Jenness
Lorne Knight
Sir Hubert Wilkins

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,
Ottawa.
Stefansson Files.

Fletcher Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Theodore Roosevelt Papers.

National Archives, Washington, D.C.:
Records of the Department of State Relating to
Internal Affairs of Russia and the Soviet Union,
1910-1929.

National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.:
Correspondence Pertaining to Stefansson.
Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa:

Diaries:
Karsten Anderson
William J. Baur
Peter Bernard
Aarnout Castel
George J. Desbarats
Adelbert G. Gumaer
John Hadley
Herman Kilian
Martin Kilian
Lorne Knight
Charles A. Lewin
Bjarne Memen
August Masik
Bert M. McConnell
William L. McKinlay
Harold Noice
Vilhjalmur Stefansson
Storker T. Storkerson
Robert J. Williamson

Rudolph Martin Anderson Papers
Sir Robert Borden Papers
Charles Camseil Papers
Papers of Mrs. J.T. Crawford
Governor General's Office
J.B. Harkin Papers
William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers & Diaries
Arthur Meighen Papers
Privy Council Records
Records of the Department of the Interior
Records of the Departments of Transport and Marine
Records of the Geological Survey of Canada

Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Ottawa Headquarters.
Canadian Arctic Expedition files (active).

University of Toronto Library, Rare Books and Special Collections:
James Mavor Papers
Sir Edmund Walker Papers

b) Interviews:
Dr. Diamond Jenness
Mr. Kenneth G. Chipman

c) Filmed Interviews:
The National Film Board of Canada.
Arctic Circle Series [1962]. [3 of the 4 films pertain
to Stefansson; the other is an interview with Henry
Larson, retired superintendent of the R.C.M.P., and
commander of the St. Roch.] Interviewer-moderator,
Trevor Lloyd, Department of Geography, McGill University:
1. The Early Journeys of Vilhjalmur Stefansson
2. The Later Journeys of Vilhjalmur Stefansson
3. Memories and Predictions

d) Printed Sources and Government Publications:


Department of Marine and Fisheries. Report of the Expedition to Hudson’s Bay and Cumberland Sound in the Steamship Diana under the command of William Wakeham in the year 1897. Ottawa, 1898.

Department of Marine and Fisheries. Report of the Dominion Government Expedition to the Arctic Islands and Hudson Strait on Board the D.G.S. Arctic, 1906-07, by Captain J.E. Bernier in Charge and Fisheries Officer. Ottawa, 1909.

Department of Marine and Fisheries. Report of the Dominion of Canada Expedition to the Arctic Islands and Hudson Strait on Board the D.G.S. Arctic 1908-09. Ottawa, 1910.

Department of Marine and Fisheries. Report of the Dominion Government Expedition to the Northern Waters and Arctic Archipelago of the D.G.S. Arctic in 1910 under the Command of J.E. Bernier. Ottawa. [1911?]

Department of Mines, Geological Survey Branch. Annual Reports.

Department of Mines and Resources. Canada’s Reindeer Herd. Ottawa, 1938.


Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-Ox Industries in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Regions of Canada. Ottawa, 1922

Department of the Interior. Annual Reports.

Department of the Naval Service. Annual Reports.


King, W.F. Report upon the Title of Canada to the Islands North of the Mainland of Canada. Ottawa, 1905.


e) Newspapers (1906-26)

London Daily Chronicle
Montreal Gazette
Montreal Daily Star
New York Times
New York Tribune
Ottawa Citizen
Ottawa Evening Journal
Ottawa Free Press
Ottawa Morning Journal
Seattle Daily Times
Toronto Daily Star
Toronto Globe

Indianapolis Star, February, 1925.
The Bulletin, [Sydney, Australia], April, 1925.

f) Select list of works by Vilhjalmur Stefansson:

[Stefansson was a prolific writer, writing over a dozen books and some 350 articles. For a complete list of his articles see the Chronological and Subject Bibliographies, published by the Stefansson Collection, January and July, 1960]
(i) Books:


The Northward Course of Empire. London: Harrap, 1922.


Northwest to Fortune; the search of Western man for a commercially practical route to the Far East. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1958.


(ii) Articles:

"A North Dakotan at Harvard", The Student [The University of North Dakota], XVII (January, 1904), pp. 4-6.

"The newer literature of Iceland", Poet Lore, (Spring, 1904), pp. 62-76.


"Icelandic Beast and Bird Lore" Journal of American Folklore, XIX (October-December, 1906), pp. 300-08.


"Stefansson and Anderson in the Canadian Arctic", *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, XLIII (October, 1911), pp. 771-75.


"Canadian Arctic Expedition", Geographical Journal, XLIV (July, 1913), pp. 49-54.


"Original observations on scurvy and my opinion of the medical profession", Medical Review of Reviews, XXIV (May, 1918), pp. 257-64.


"The north that never was", The World's Work, XLIII (December, 1921), pp. 188-200.


"Every science an exact science", The American Mercury, I (March, 1924), pp. 455-63.

"Arctic air routes to the Orient", The Forum, LXXII (December, 1924), pp. 721-32.

"Spend your vacation at the north pole", Collier's, XXVI (November, 1925).


"New polar trails", The Forum, LXXVII (January, 1927), pp. 54-64.

"Are explorers to join the dodo?", The American Mercury, XI (May, 1927), pp. 13-18.

"By air to the ends of the earth", Natural History, XXVIII (September-October, 1928), pp. 451-62.


"The theoretical continent", Natural History, XXIX (September-October, 1929), pp. 465-80.

"The Eskimo word 'Iglu'", Science, LXXXIII (March 13, 1931); pp. 285-86.

"Blue eyes for brown", Science, LXXVII (February 17, 1933), pp. 191-192.


"Routes to Alaska", Foreign Affairs, XIX (July, 1941), pp. 861-69.

"See your dentist twice a year", The Atlantic, CLXXVI (November, 1945), pp. 61-66.


"The Arctic", Air Affairs, III (Spring, 1950), pp. 391-402.

"From the Pioneer West to the Arctic", [Interview] The Westerner's Brand Book, XIII (October, 1956), pp. 57-58.


SECONDARY SOURCES

a) Books:


--------- The Northwest Passage; being the record of the voyage of exploration of the ship 'Gjoa', 1903-07. New York: Dutton, 1908.


Berry, Erick. Mr. Arctic; an account of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: David McKay, 1966.


Harrison, Alfred H. In Search of a Polar Continent. Toronto: Musson, 1908.


MacInnes, T., ed. *Klenenberg of the Arctic.* London and Toronto: Jonathon Cape, 1932.


Mikkelsen, E. *Conquering the Arctic Ice.* London: Heinemann, 1909.


Nansen, F. *Farthest North.* New York, 1897.


Smedal, Gustav. Acquisition of Sovereignty over Polar Areas. Oslo: I Kommissjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1931.


Smolka, Harry Peter. Forty Thousand Against the Arctic: Russia's Polar Empire. London: Hutchinson, 1937.


Wilkins, Sir George Hubert. Flying the Arctic. New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1928.


b) Articles:


"Recent Explorations on the Canadian Arctic Coast", The Geographical Review. IV (October, 1917), pp. 241-66.


"Is Hudson Bay a Closed or an Open Sea?", The American Journal of International Law. VI (April, 1912), pp. 409-59.


Clemenson, H.M. "Laws of Maritime Jurisdiction in Time of Peace, with Special Reference to Territorial Waters", The British Year Book of International Law. VI (1925), pp. 144-58.


Cooper, John C. "Airspace Rights over the Arctic", Air Affairs. III (December, 1950), pp. 517-40.


Ellis, F.H. "First flights in the Canadian Arctic", Beaver. Outfit 281 (1950), pp. 16-17.

Finnie, O.S. "Reindeer for the Canadian Eskimos", Natural History. XXXI (July-August, 1931), pp. 469-16.


Howard, Robert West. "He eats fat...to stay lean", National live stock producer. XXXIV (October, 1956), pp. 9, 18.

Hyde, Charles C. "Case concerning the legal status of eastern Greenland", American Journal of International Law. XXVII (October, 1933), 732-38.


Johnston, V. Kenneth. "Canada's Title to the Arctic Islands", Canadian Historical Review. XIV (March, 1933), pp. 24-41.

------ "Canada's Title to Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait", The British Year Book of International Law. XV (1934), pp. 1-20.

Lakhtine, Vladimir L. "Rights over the Arctic", American Journal of International Law. XXIV (1930), pp. 703-17.


Miller, David Hunter. "Political Rights in the Arctic", Foreign Affairs. iv (October, 1925), pp. 47-60.


Seltzer, Carl C. "The anthropometry of the Western and Copper Eskimos based on the data of Vilhjalmur Stefansson", Human Biology. V (September, 1933), pp. 413-70.


Smith, Gordon W. "The transfer of arctic territories from Great Britain to Canada in 1880, and some related matters, as seen in official correspondence", Arctic. XIV (March, 1961), pp. 53-73.


c) Unpublished Studies:


