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FOREWORD

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Scott Polar Research Institute. The circumstances of war hardly permit any form of celebration other than a major article looking back on the early and difficult days. The building is about to be handed back and plans for a resumption of full activity are already well advanced. Rising costs in nearly everything concerned with running such an institute will have to be met from slender resources, and the Editor would like to point out to our readers that they may help considerably if they can increase the sale of the *Polar Record*, the publication of which is a heavy drain on the Institute's funds.

It is just one hundred years ago since Sir John Franklin's last expedition set out to seek the North-west Passage, and we hope to publish an article later in the year on that milestone in polar exploration. In the meantime we can congratulate the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on a second voyage through the famous passage. In October of last year S./Sgt. H. A. Larsen with ten policemen brought his 95 ft. schooner *St Roch* into Vancouver after a 7500 mile voyage from Halifax, accomplished in 86 days. It will be remembered that the same schooner with the same master made the west to east passage in 1940-2, taking 28 months. Further details will be published when they are available. It is interesting to note that Sergeant Larsen chose the more northern route, precisely that which Sir Edward Parry attempted over a century before.

News has been received that the Arctic Institute of the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route has returned to Leningrad to resume work under the Director, Hero of the Soviet Union Buinitsky. The staff had been evacuated to an eastern town where it had continued its work under the direction of Professor Gize. It is hoped that the long break in contact between Russian and British explorers may soon be ended. Most of these explorers have been serving in the armed forces of their respective countries, and in an article in this issue we record the awards of honours to Soviet service men and civilians for their work in Arctic operations.

We are happy to recall to our readers certain other recent honours. His Majesty the King of Norway has appointed Professor R. N. Rudmose-Brown and Mr J. M. Wordie as Commanders of the Order of St Olav in recognition of services rendered by them during the war.

Mr J. M. Wordie has been awarded the Scottish Geographical Society's Gold Medal for his work in the Antarctic and on expeditions to Spitsbergen, Jan Mayen, Greenland and the Canadian Arctic.

The Joint Committee of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Royal Physical Society, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society have awarded the Bruce Memorial Prize for 1944 to Lieut. T. H. Manning, R.C.N.V.R., for his survey and biological work in Iceland, Lapland, Southampton Island, Hudson Bay, and around Foxe Basin.

We have received news of the constitution, at the instance of the Geological Society of South Africa, of a South African Antarctic Research Committee. We understand that they are considering the possibility of a South African expedition to the Antarctic after the war. The interest of South Africa in the polar lands to the south has hitherto been without any clear expression and we welcome the new development.

Throughout its history the Institute has owed a very great deal to its Assistants. In connexion with the article in this issue we print as frontispiece a portrait of the first of the four Assistants we have had, Miss W. M. Drake, now Mrs G. D. Hayes. It is taken from a photograph made by Miss Anne West and kindly presented to us.

The most recent of the four, Mrs E. E. Benest, is now about to leave us after three years of loyal service under the very difficult conditions imposed by the war. The Institute owes her a deep debt of gratitude for her help in a period when there were few visitors to lighten the more monotonous side of the work.

Miss Elizabeth Rought has been appointed as her successor and will take up her duties in April.