

## NOTES AND REVIEWS

### THE ARCTIC CIRCLE, OTTAWA

[MS. received March 1949.]

There are probably more persons actively interested in the Arctic in Ottawa than in any other city in Canada. The majority of these individuals are working for the Dominion Government, since nearly all departments are concerned to an increasing degree with arctic problems, and send members of their staffs into the north country.

Unfortunately it seemed, until a short time ago, that many opportunities were lost for bringing together scientists, travellers, and others engaged on work in similar regions on behalf of other departments. T. H. Manning and G. W. Rowley therefore asked fifteen friends to a preliminary meeting in November 1947 to discuss forming an arctic club which would provide a common meeting place. As a result of this preliminary discussion, invitations were sent out to a number of people in Ottawa who might be interested. About one hundred persons attended the first meeting on 8 December 1947. They heard F/Lt. A. H. Tinker give an account of the establishment of weather stations at Eureka Sound and Cornwallis Island by Task Force 68, and later discussed the formation of a club. The proposal was received with enthusiasm, and over seventy members joined the club which it was decided to call "The Arctic Circle".

The object of the club as defined in the constitution is: "To enable those interested in the Arctic to meet for informal discussion and to keep club members informed of current happenings in the Arctic." Membership is open to all those who are or have been actively interested in the Arctic. At the second meeting, on 15 January 1948, the members elected the officers and fifteen committee members: Erling Porsild was elected president, Frank Davies vice-president, T. H. Manning secretary, and Diana Rowley editor.

In the course of 1948 eight meetings were held at monthly intervals, except during the summer months when many members were in the field. These meetings are usually opened by a short talk or a film given by someone recently returned from the Arctic, and the rest of the evening is devoted to informal discussion. The average attendance is about one hundred. The titles of lectures or films held during 1948 were: the first voyage of the *St Roch* through the North-West Passage, a film with commentary by Sgt. Farrar; the search for the North Magnetic Pole, by R. G. Madill; Operation "Polco" by F/Lt. J. F. Drake; Exercise "Musk-Ox", a film with commentary by Lt.-Col. Andrew Croft; botanical, geological and archaeological investigations carried out along the Alaska Highway 1943-44 by Dr Hugh M. Raup; voyages of R.M.S. *Nascopie*, a film with commentary by J. G. Wright; mining in the Northwest Territories by Dr C. S. Lord, and Operation "Magnetic" by Paul Serson. In addition a picnic was held in August at the summer home of Dr and Mrs D. Jenness.

In order to inform club members about matters of interest in the Arctic it was decided that a short mimeographed bulletin, the *Arctic Circular*, would be published during the winter months. The *Circular* aims to provide concise and accurate information on current events in the Arctic and to assist research by including requests for information on particular regions or subjects. The emphasis throughout is on events in the Canadian Arctic, but other news is also included when available. By the end of the year eight numbers had been issued, making a first volume of 102 pages.

As it was believed that a number of people closely connected with the Arctic, but living outside Ottawa, were interested in the club, it was decided that non-residents might become members by subscribing one dollar a year, which is half the Ottawa subscription. Non-resident members receive the *Arctic Circular* and may attend all meetings. Originally fifty persons, living outside Ottawa but personally known to members, were invited to join. Since that time a number of requests for membership have been received from those living elsewhere in Canada, in the United States and in Europe. At the time of the annual general meeting on 13 January 1949 there were 175 Ottawa members and 188 out-of-town members, making a total of 363. The membership includes practically all Canadian scientists and explorers who have spent any length of time in the Arctic, and a number of these contribute notes to the *Circular*.

DIANA ROWLEY

#### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

[Sir John Franklin's last letter to his friend and comrade, Dr (later Sir John) Richardson, is in the possession of Lt.-Col. P. V. W. Gell, of Hopton Hall, Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Colonel Gell, who is a great-grandson of Franklin, has kindly supplied the Institute with a copy and given permission for it to be published in the *Polar Record*. It throws much light on Franklin's plans for his final expedition and we are grateful for the opportunity to give it publication.]

Whale Fish Islands,  
Disco Bay,  
7th July 1845

My dear Richardson,

You will be glad to know that we made our passage to this place in good time. We anchored early on the morning of the 4th, and having got the transport alongside, began very soon to unload her. We have, however, some doubt whether the ships, the *Terror* in particular, will be able to take all she has brought for us without being too deep in the water. Time and care are also requisite to make the best stowage we can in our very limited room. Crozier and James [Fitzjames] resolved to carry all the provision and fuel we can. We have been favoured with the most beautiful weather for the observations on shore and various sets of officers are busy at the Magnetic Instruments, the observations for Latitude and Longitude and in getting Angles for the survey of the Islands, if our stay permits. Specimens of the rocks and of the few plants and birds have been taken. Mr. Goodsir has been very assiduous throughout in his dredging and has caught great numbers on our passage of crustaceae—