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# The Icelandic Canadian

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### GUEST EDITORIAL:

The First Migratory Bird, by Watson Kirkconnell.....	10
At the Editor's Desk .....	13

### FEATURE ARTICLES

Time Passes — Customs Change — Philip M. Petursson.....	15
History of an Icelandic Settlement — Lois Ann Sander.....	17
Reminiscences of Jonas Th. Jonasson — Sigurbjorg Stefansson.....	20
Louise Johnson — Ingibjorg Goodridge .....	29

### CENTRE SPREAD PICTURE — Stag Party, 1930, at the Marlborough Hotel

FICTION: Parable—The Ice Drift, Johann Magnus Bjarnason translated by Kristjan J. Austmann.....	46
--	----

POETRY: Outcasts, Paul Sigurdson .....	41
Baby Teresa's Day, Art Reykdal .....	47

BOOK REVIEW: Ice and Fire, Hjalmar R. Bárðarson Reviewed by George Hanson .....	55
--	----

### MISCELLANEOUS

The Icelandic National League Convention ...	35
Icelandic Canadian Club Annual Dinner & Dance .....	38
Manitoba Historical Society Centennial Awards .....	42
The Roots Lie Deep, W. Kristjanson .....	44
The Three Norns, or Fates, in Norse Mythology .....	45
Preservation of Historic Places .....	49
Paul Sigurdson's Play "The Icelander", W. Kristjanson .....	51
Strong is the Bond of Kinship, W. Kristjanson .....	53
IN THE NEWS: 28, 34, 40, 48, 52, 56, 57, 58, 60—63 AWARD WINNERS .....	39

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

## The First Migratory Bird

by Watson Kirkconnell

Canadians of Icelandic origin will celebrate in 1972 the centenary of their settlement in this country. If we try to pinpoint the beginning of that ethnic epic, we shall doubtless fix on September 12, 1872, the day when Sigtryggur Jonasson, the first bird of the migratory flock, arrived in Quebec City. He was only twenty years old, but his share in the settling of his people was a notable one.

During his first two years in Canada, spent largely in Ontario, he worked as a lumberjack, in a railway-car factory, on a railroad and as a sawmill-hand, and then (in partnership with an Ontario businessman) profitably blended these experiences in selling ties to the New York Central Railway. In September 1874, as an agent for the Ontario government, he conducted 365 newly landed Icelanders from Quebec to Kinmount, 34 miles northeast of Lindsay, Ontario, where they were to be employed in building a new "Victoria Railway". The task included the grubbing out of huge pine stumps in the sandy wilderness, the blasting of some miles of Precambrian granite in creating a right-of-way and the filling of an almost bottomless sinkhole north of Kinmount; but a worse hardship was an epidemic of dysentery, aggravated by primitive accommodation, that cost the community (according to Simon Simonarson) some forty lives. Jonasson helped

to maintain Icelandic morale by establishing a general store in Kinmount and by teaching his countrymen English in an Icelandic school. Nearly fifty years later an octogenarian Lindsay bookseller, R. S. Porter by name, told me of his amazement in 1874-75 at the high quality of the English literature purchased from him by these Icelanders out of their scanty wages.

But the immigrants from Iceland found no land in the sterile Kinmount area to justify a permanent community. The railway work was only a temporary expedient to raise funds and they must look farther afield for serious settlement. Some of the discouraged colonists were persuaded in 1875 by Johannes Arngrimsson to move to "Mooseland Heights," an equally worthless upland overlooking the comparatively fertile (and already settled) Musquodoboit Valley, in Nova Scotia. Some Icelanders in the United States were urging in 1874-75 that the whole contingent shift to a sea-coast location in Alaska. Others, however, among whom Sigtryggur Jonasson was a leader, counselled rather a transfer to Manitoba, where "New Iceland" was presently set aside by the federal government on the western shore of Lake Winnipig, just north of the then northern boundary of the "postage stamp province" (established in 1870). New Iceland, incidentally, was not on the open prairie but in the low, marshy

poplar-clad "interlake" area between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, part of the aboriginal haunts of the "Swampy Crees."

It was Jonasson who, along with John Taylor (Supervisor of the Shanty Men's Mission of the Canadian Bible Society), negotiated with Ottawa for funds to finance the move to Manitoba and also, at government expense, made a special exploratory trip to the West, to see what advance arrangements would be needed. While John Taylor escorted the Kinmount contingent to Manitoba, in September-October 1875, Sigtryggur Jonasson was one of two immigration agents sent to Iceland to mobilize a second contingent. A disastrous volcanic eruption had devastated some populous districts in the North, and by the spring of 1876 over twelve hundred survivors had signified their desire to move to Canada.

Jonasson shepherded them across the Atlantic and, as Assistant Icelandic Agent (under John Taylor), distributed government supplies in New Iceland and kept the community's accounts. During the winter of 1876-77, from one-third to one-half of the population were afflicted by a deadly epidemic of smallpox. The almost total lack of roads, drainage and cleared land made conditions of life still more dreadful.

In 1877, a constitution was drawn up for "New Iceland," which enjoyed partial autonomy outside the boundaries of Manitoba. There were to be four districts (Willow Point, Arnes, River and Big Island), each with its reeve and council of five, while a regional council (consisting of a President, a Vice-President and the four Reeves) dealt with matters concerning the colony as a whole. It is noteworthy that the President of the Council for 1877 and 1878 was Sigtryggur Jonasson

(who began his presidency at the age of twenty-six). In 1877, moreover, he founded and began to edit at Lundi (now Riverton) an Icelandic newspaper named *Framfari*.

The next two years almost saw the death of New Iceland. Mud, flies and remoteness from markets were smothering the settlement. Even worse was a frenzy of religious confrontation, in which a Fundamentalist pastor from the Missouri Synod, Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, damned his local opponents as heretics, unacceptable for burial in a common cemetery, and urged the faithful to move to safer pastures in North Dakota. The finishing touch was given by the "Great Flood" on November 5, 1879, in which a gale on Lake Winnipeg drove the water inland among the pioneer houses, sometimes up to the top of the foundations. That same night brought a hard frost that left haystacks frozen and soon had cattle starving. The exodus of discouraged settlers became a stampede, and by 1881 only some 250 persons were left in the whole area. Administratively it was absorbed into Manitoba and the chapter seemed closed.

Once more, Sigtryggur Jonasson stood by the Icelandic colony. Operating from a new home in Selkirk, he built a sawmill at Icelandic River (to provide employment), purchased a small steamboat, the *Victoria*, and built two barges for the transportation of lumber and supplies. Such operations, together with the dogged determination of the survivors, slowly saved and rebuilt the community. By 1894, its population stood at 1557 or more than the maximum before the Exodus.

In 1887, Jonasson was one of the founders (and the chief financial supporter) of the weekly Icelandic news-

paper, **Lögberg**, in Winnipeg, and a little later, in 1895-1901, he spent six years as its editor. In 1896, he was elected a Liberal member of the Manitoba legislature, the first Icelander in Canada to be elected to a provincial parliament. After representing the St. Andrew's riding in 1896-99, he was later elected member for Gimli in 1907-10. In 1885, it had been he who made a formal motion to build a Lutheran church in Winnipeg; and in 1899 he became chairman of a Board of Directors for a projected Icelandic academy in Winnipeg, in due course the Jon Bjarnason Academy (1914-49).

The foregoing detailed sketch of Sigtryggur Jonasson must not be taken to imply that he was the greatest member of the Icelandic ethnic group in Canada. During the past one hundred years there have been a score of Canadian Icelanders with greater endowments and more distinguished records. Yet there is a sense in which his arrival in Canada in 1872 ought to be taken as the authentic *terminus a quo* for any centennial celebration. More than any other individual, he presided over the founding of the new community. He recruited in Northern Iceland most of the "Large Group" that came

to Canada in 1876. He was the first President (of the Council) of New Iceland. When disaster and a wholesale exodus almost wiped it out, he saved it and nursed it back to vitality by his economic measures. And he was the first Icelander to represent his people in any Canadian legislature.

From the beginning he had stood for two basic principles: settlement in Canada (as opposed to dispersal in the United States) and the preservation of the ethnic culture with the founding and editing of two Icelandic newspapers and he was closely identified with education for his people. The close of the centennium in Canada has brought a general recognition of his ideal of a multicultural nation. The young man who landed at Quebec in 1872 would not be dissatisfied today with the manifest survival of his ideals.

The centennial celebrations in 1972 will proudly recapitulate the ethnic achievements in creative literature, education, industry, law, medicine, military service, music, politics, religion, scholarship, science, sport, temperance, and much else; but the story begins with Sigtryggur Jonasson.



## AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

### A letter to the Editor

Mr. Gustav A. Finnson, formerly of Selkirk, Manitoba, now of Richmond, B.C., has written regarding an account in the Spring 1970 Icelandic Canadian, of Icelandic Canadian literature in the Vancouver Public Library. A reference to a set of the magazine touched a responsive chord.

"In 1963 I was living at Langley, B.C. and enjoying retirement and raising Arabian horses. Without any warning I lost my health, and my wife and I decided to sell everything and move into an apartment in Vancouver.

"There was a great deal of stuff to move, including a complete set of 'The Icelandic Canadian' magazine which I was proud of. Our apartment had less space than we had been used to, so we had to dispose of some of our things. Therefore, in 1965, I gave my complete set — up to I think the Summer Edition of that year — to the Vancouver Public Library, for which I have a letter of thanks. . .

"I enjoy the Icelandic Canadian very much and am glad I have had this to keep me in touch with people of my ancestry through your magazine. Until I went Overseas in early 1915 I was quite fluent in Icelandic; speech, reading and writing, but as I have had little opportunity since of speaking it, I have discovered that I have almost lost it, although I have some success in reading the Logberg-Heimskringla. Some of the writing baffles

me as there are so many strange words that I cannot understand."

Mr. Finnson will be interested to know that at the time of my visit to the Vancouver Library, the Icelandic Canadian collection of literature there was in use by a student doing research in the field.

Mr. Finnson is a veteran of World War I, enlisting in the Canadian Artillery in July 1915. He saw action at St. Eloi, Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, Arras and Cambrai.



### The Golden Voices Opera Manitoba

The Golden Voices Opera Manitoba is a new organization whose basic objective is the development of Manitoba talent and the eventual establishment of a school of opera. This group is backed by such province-wide organizations as the Manitoba Council of Women (with some 40,000 members in the affiliated groups), Rotary, Kiwanis and other clubs.

"We have professional, talented soloists living in the province . . . Manitoba is particularly rich in its Ethnic Mosaic, great choirs and choruses in Ukrainian, German, Icelandic, Mennonite, Italian, Scottish, Irish and French".

The first production will be "The Barber of Seville", "There will follow in time, a succession of famous operas produced in various languages. thus



honouring and securing support from our Ethnic Mosaic."

An account of this Manitoba enterprise is included in **The Icelandic Canadian Magazine**, with the thought that this local citizens' project to provide scope for unused professional talent and other high-class performers may provide a source of inspiration for like projects elsewhere.

★

#### The Icelandic Canadian travels to the four corners of the world

Perhaps our readers generally are not aware of the extensive coverage of the **Icelandic Canadian**. Below are the names of our subscribers farthest north, farthest south, farthest east, and farthest west.

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#### Manitoba Theatre Centre Production HEAD 'EM OFF AT THE PAS

A Manitoba Theatre Centre release on its entertaining musical production **HEAD 'EM OFF AT THE PAS**, is worth quoting in part in **The Icelandic Canadian**. "The show is composed of anecdotes, headlines, stories, songs and dances" and slides, or still pictures, and this account may well serve as an inspiration for the people of Icelandic descent in Winnipeg, the Interlake District, Argyle, Swan River, and other communities in the preparation of a documentary for the centennial of Icelandic settlement in Manitoba, in 1875.

The idea is that this musical documentary will indicate to various towns how (comparatively) easily and successfully this kind of show can be assembled and produced. And, more important, how exciting and worthwhile a community project such as this can be.

★

#### THE MILLENNIAL OF AN ATTEMPTED ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN CANADA

We celebrate in 1972 the centennial of permanent Icelandic settlement in Canada. At the same time we are mindful of the approaching millennial of the first attempt of Icelandic settlement in Canada. A few years before 1000 A.D., there were Eiriksson and his one ship crew, for one year, then Thorfinn Karlsefni with his three ships, for three years.



Philip M. Petursson

## Time Passes — Customs Change

Very early in its history the First Icelandic Unitarian Church of Winnipeg (organized in 1891) initiated a custom which was observed continuously over the years until last year, when because of circumstances of changing times it was deemed necessary and advisable to bring it to an end.

It had been the practice for members of the church to gather in the church on each New Year's Eve just before midnight to bid the old year farewell, with a brief nostalgic glance over the months that had passed, and to welcome the new year with a forward look in anticipation of what it might have in store. My memory goes back to the occasions of such gatherings in the old Icelandic Unitarian Church on Sherbrook Street and Sargent Avenue, and to the continuation of the observance in the First Federated Church on Banning Street, now bearing the name Unitarian Church of Winnipeg.

The services were always conducted in Icelandic, old and well-loved hymns were sung. Among them were such well-known numbers as "Nú árið er liðið í aldanna skaut" by Valdimar Briem; "Hvað boðar nýárs blessuð sól" by Páll Jónsson; "Nýtt ár ennþá guð oss gefur" by Matthías Jöchumsson, and others. Appropriate selections were read from the scriptures and other writings, and a brief sermon was given.

Some old timers will recall the occasions when Arinbjorn Bardal attended the services and set up a flaming

torch in a snow bank in a yard beside the church, reminiscent of similar observances in Iceland when darkness enveloped the land and men longed for lengthening days and warm sunshine. As people left the church Arinbjorn greeted them joyously as they joined hands in a circle around the flame and sang popular old Icelandic songs. In much merriment they sang, and the more venturesome among the men sealed their greetings to the ladies with a kiss, following which all made their way home in high spirits. When Arinbjorn was no longer able to keep his date with his friends at midnight on new year's eve, his two sons took over, and for several years Njáll and Gerry, in turn, carried on the custom of burning a New Year's Eve torch at midnight outside the church. Many of the old timers recall the occasions with pleasure and appreciation.

Each minister of the church, in turn carried on the New Year's observance, from the earliest days of the church until New Year's Eve of a year ago, and led the members in singing the old hymns, in prayers for good days to come and in thanks for days gone by. Among them were such men as Björn Petursson; Magnús J. Skaptason; Jóhann P. Solmundsson; Rögnvaldur Petursson; Guðmundur Árnason; Ragnar H. Kvaran; Benjamin Kristjánsson; Jacob Jónsson, and the writer of this article.

It will be with regret that some of the older people who attended these services regularly, will see them discon-

tinued. But, as it is said in the scriptures, all things have their time. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose, . . ." It has seemed that the time has now come to call an end to this custom, however much happiness and pleasure it has given to the church members and friends. The truth is that where in an earlier day these midnight observances were well attended, there are now progressively fewer of the older members who are able to turn out to them. The weight of the years and failing health make it difficult to venture forth in the depth of a midwinter's night. There seems, therefore to be no alternative.

Over the years there have been many who, by their attendance or by their direct participation in these services, have helped to make them an important and a meaningful occasion. It is fitting that I give recognition to them. For instance, among those who acted as organists or as choir leaders, some of whom were before my time, I might name Jóhanna Hannesson; Jón Friðfinnson; Gísli Johnson; Thorarinn Jónsson; Brynjólfur Thorláksson; Jón-

as Pálsson; Páll S. Dalman; Stefan Solvason; Mrs. Bjorg Ísfeld, Björgvin Guðmundsson; and Gunnar Erlendsson. The last named played the organ and conducted the choir -for a longer period than any of his predecessors. Among those who conducted the choir and served as soloists were: Mrs. P. S. Dalman; Mrs. Freda Johannesson; Rósa Hermanson (Mrs. Roy Vernon); Pétur Magnús; Miss Lóa Davidson and Mrs. Elma Gislason.

Over the years all of these people have helped to make the occasions I am specifically recalling, moments of significance and joy. The New Year's Eve services have now been discontinued. But the memory of many happy gatherings, in the depth of winter, at the moment of midnight, as one year ended and another one began, will live in the memory of those who attended them as meaningful occasions, and as moments of happy associations, a real milestone in the lives of each. As each new year rolls around my greeting will continue to be the same, to all of them and to the memory of those who are no longer with us,

Þökk fyrir liðnu árin öll  
okkar á vegi breiðum  
þökk fyrir andans fögru fjöll  
fundin á þínum leiðum.

-G. J.

## HISTORY OF AN ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT

A first prize essay in the Icelandic Festival essay competition in 1971

by Lois Anne Sander

In the fall of 1875, the first Icelandic settlers came to the Canadian West. The first Icelandic settlement in Manitoba was at Gimli, or to the Icelanders it was known as "Paradise" or "Great Hall of Heaven".

The Dyngja mountains in Iceland erupted in 1875, covering miles and miles of farmland with its lava and ash. Now in a large region in Iceland there would be too many people for the land that was left. They were seeking a country like their own; one with ample pastures for grazing and ample lakes, abundant in fish. The first Icelanders settled at Muskoka (1873) and Kinmount (1874) in Ontario. But due to insufficient and unsuitable land and lack of employment, they sought a better place for their permanent settlement. Sigtryggur Jonasson and John Taylor searched for an area large enough for them all where the Icelanders could preserve their language, customs, and national heritage. Finally, a suitable site was found along the west shore of Lake Winnipeg. The Canadian government gave the Icelanders the right to settle there and provided financial assistance to settle in their new home which they named Gimli.

To the Icelanders, this was the dream, the realization of which they had been looking for. It met all the requirements of the settlers. The site was sufficiently isolated so they could

preserve their customs and language. While at the same time, Winnipeg was easily accessible by a water route and the Canadian Pacific Railway was under construction from the east. It was proposed that it would continue north-west from Selkirk through the Interlake area. This would provide ample transportation to and from the colony. Other factors influencing settlement at Gimli were:

(1) that the shore was heavily wooded, providing material for fuel and shelter; (2) Lake Winnipeg was filled with fish for eating and for the market; (3) the land inland was rich for farming; and (4) there was ample pasture land suitable for stock raising. Gimli was the Icelander's dream come true.

In 1875, some two hundred and fifty Icelanders, in their flat-boats landed at Willow Point, three miles south of Gimli, because of bad weather conditions. Their first task was to find some shelter as winter was approaching. A few log cabins, along with a store-house, were erected hastily. Others lived temporarily in their flat-boats frozen in the ice or in buffalo hide tents, but they promptly set about erecting log-cabins. Their first winter would put their determination and hardiness to a very severe test. There was short rations, an improper diet with no milk, inadequate housing facilities, and long snowbound nights in poorly constructed cabins. Many

died of scurvy, exposure and starvation.

To compensate for the high death rate, in the summer of 1876, approximately one thousand more Icelanders settled in the colony. Later in the fall of the same year and the winter of 1877, an epidemic of small pox broke out. The entire colony was placed in quarantine from November 1876 to July 1877. A storehouse was converted to a hospital with three doctors tending to the suffering. Over one hundred lives were claimed in the epidemic, and many hearts were scarred by the loss of loved ones.

In the same year, Lord Dufferin, the settlers' benefactor, came to visit the colony. His visit gave the settlers the much needed sympathy, encouragement, and inspiration essential to an expanding colony.

From 1877 the colony got under way. Fields were increasing and fishing boats were being constructed. The building of roads was a necessity. There was talk about schools, churches and government. Classes in English and other subjects were organized. The colonists sensed that their children needed to be educated in the language of their new country. Caroline Taylor, John Taylor's niece, was the first teacher and the first bride in the colony. Later, in the 1880's, two schools were begun by Gudni Thorsteinsson with him as teacher. School districts were also set up in the late 1880's. The Rev. Jon Bjarnason and The Rev. Pall Thorlaksson early formed the first Lutheran Church Organizations. Although they differed in their religious views, both were Lutheran. The early church life played an important role in the future of the colony.

"Framfari", or "The Progressive", the first newspaper in the colony, re-

lated the establishment of self-government. In 1877, a council was formed for local self-government. The colony became the so-called Republic of New Iceland in 1878 and a constitution was set up. Their constitution, or code of laws, was complete to the last minute detail concerning the management of government affairs, and the citizens' responsibilities and duties to each other and their community. The elected members of the government held assemblies where, in their native tongue, they debated and solved problems that arose. This constitution lasted until 1887 when municipal government was instituted with the newly formed municipalities of Gimli and Bifrost.

Because of wet seasons and a religious controversy, many of the Icelanders migrated to other parts of Canada between 1878 and 1886. There were many reasons why the people left. Because of the controversy between the followers of the two ministers, people began to leave with hard feelings. Lack of profitable employment proved to be an influencing factor in the migration of the colonists. The marketing of produce: cordwood and fish also forced the people to move to better surroundings. Only some 250 persons of over 1500 remained after this exodus.

A change in the tide came in the 1880's and 1890's, when large numbers arrived from Iceland. By 1900 the population had increased again to 2000. The railway that was once proposed for the colony was finally completed in 1907. This gave the settlers a new incentive. A number of businesses were established. People from Winnipeg bought summer cottages along the lake shore. The colony became a village in 1908. Johannes Sigurdson was its first mayor.

The following four decades were slow but gradual in development. The Town of Gimli was incorporated in 1947, with a population of about 1500. Up until now Gimli was known as a fishing town and a summer resort. The summer population would double with holidayers. Two miles west of Gimli was the Canadian Forces Base, which is now not in operation. The "Framfari" was discontinued in 1880. Commanding Officer J. F. Dunlop of the Can. Forces Base founded a second "Framfari" in 1968. The people of Gimli truly appreciated the paper for three years until the "Framfari" was discontinued with the closing of the Canadian Forces Base. The Department of Education of Manitoba has a summer school camp for teachers near the town. At present the camp is in use most of the year not only for teachers but for other training programs. One in particular was the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Gimli does not now have the fishing industry or the Canadian Forces Base to rely on, but Gimli is still popular as a summer resort and new industries are being established. There is a distillery, winery and bottling company located north of the town. Airplanes and boats are being made where the Base used to be situated. Fur farming has in-

creased as an important industry. Mixed farming is still a major industry.

Throughout the history of Gimli, the Icelandic Library Association maintained its own library within the town. To celebrate Canada's 100 birthday the Town of Gimli built a new library. Incorporated with this was the Icelandic Library. Also in Canada's Centennial year a Viking statue was erected. In four years time will be Gimli's Centennial. To celebrate this the Icelanders intend to make a replica of the Viking longship. Two male students of Red River Community College, Winnipeg, made a model to illustrate the ship. The model was a cake made entirely of meringue. Each year the Icelandic Celebration is held in the Gimli Park on the first weekend in August.

Gimli remains prominently an Icelandic community. The Icelanders have preserved their language, customs and national heritage through many years of hardship and toil. Such organizations as the Icelandic Library Association, the Gimli branch of the National League, the Icelandic Women's League, and the Centennial Committees have enabled the Icelanders at Gimli to maintain their culture and traditions.



## Reminiscences of Jonas Th. Jonasson

by Sigurbjorg Stefansson



Jonas Th. Jonasson, B.A.

Casual visitors to Gimli as well as residents there often give more than a passing glance to a man of unusually erect bearing and tall, well-built form who is out for his customary walk. Something about his composed, dignified manner attracts their notice even in a group, yet he is the last man to call attention to himself, being always calm and quiet in voice and manner. Somehow they sense a personality of more than ordinary qualities.

This man is Jónas Th. Jónasson, who, though over eighty, retains the alert mind and retentive memory that enable him to survey the long panorama of the past with a vivid recall of people and events.

He was born on February 3, 1890, at Syðri-Neslönd in Mývatnssveit, Iceland, the youngest of the seven children of Þorlákur Jónasson of Grænavatn and his wife Krístrún, daughter of Pétur Jónsson of Reykjahlíð. He

was only three years of age when his family emigrated to Canada and settled in the Argyle district of Manitoba residing mainly near Baldur. Readers of the Icelandic-Canadian will recall his perceptive portrayal of church activities and social life in the Argyle community published in the autumn issue of 1970.

By 1893, though pioneer life there was still one of unremitting toil, the sharpest edge of its hardships had been broken by still earlier settlers, from 1880 on, who had established farms and already replaced the first huts with better homes. Jónas Jónasson has clear recollections of many of the leading early pioneers of Kinmount, New Iceland and finally of Argyle, such as Friðjón Friðriksson, Sigurður Kristófersson, Kristján Jónsson, Skafti Arason, Árni Sveinsson and William Taylor, to name a few. His outstanding impression of them as a group is that almost without exception they were cheerful, jolly and optimistic men with great faith in the future. Hardly any expressed regret at having come to Canada. Perhaps it required exactly that forward-looking spirit to weather the most primitive of pioneer conditions.

He plainly remembers one outstanding example of the indomitable spirit of independence that prevailed among these early Icelandic settlers, that of Ásmundur Ásmundsson, an Argyle pioneer of 1884. While still in Iceland he had through frostbite lost

both feet, one hand and two fingers of the remaining hand. Crude amputations had left the stumps prone to bleeding. Yet he still managed to earn his living and later moved to Canada with his wife and settled in the Argyle district. For years he was an independent and fairly prosperous farmer. By 1898 he had given up farming and become a cowherd, looking after community pastures. Jonas remembers him with his two short wooden peg legs, a hook replacing one hand and the other hand lacking two fingers. He often saw him driving in a buckboard to survey the community herds which he had been engaged to look after. Through further amputations done by skilled surgery in Winnipeg his wounds had finally been healed. He was a man of careful speech, well acquainted with current affairs. To the very end of a long life he worked for his living.

A great incentive to the Jónassons in emigrating to Canada had been the prospect of better schooling and greater opportunities for their children. To the mother, who had been reluctant to leave Iceland, this had been the deciding factor.

On arrival in Argyle the three oldest children had to seek work, but within a month two of the younger brothers, aged seven and eight, were attending the five-mile distant Hecla School. Not long after they were transferred to the Holar school, three miles from their home, which Jónas later attended for two summers. This ungraded school was then taught by Mr. Gilbert Robinson, who knew no Icelandic, whereas his pupils, numbering over thirty, were all Icelandic immigrants ranging in age from about seven to twenty-five years who knew no English. However, with pupils eager to learn and a teacher attentive

to work the language barrier broke down remarkably fast and progress through the grades was rapid. As an added bonus the teacher, a soccer fan, taught the boys football and developed a team that later defeated the adult Baldur team.

In 1899 the Jónasson children of school age entered the Baldur school, where the Icelanders were in a minority. They did so with considerable misgivings, not to say fear and trembling, as to how they might be treated; as if almost expecting that they might be "eaten alive". However, neither they at school, nor their elders at work experienced the least trace of discrimination against the Icelanders by the English-speaking people of the community. Yet a form of fear or shyness had kept a few other Icelandic children from enrolling in school till aged 12-14, quite unnecessarily as it turned out. The principal, who taught all subjects from Grades VIII to XI required for entrance to teacher training, was a remarkably fine, kindly man, Mr. James Plewes, later an inspector.

This was not to say that school was then permissive; far from it. Jónas vividly remembers a boy (not Icelandic) who made numerous mistakes being not once but regularly taken out into the hall by the esteemed lady teacher and given approximately as many sound whacks as his errors had been.

Moreover, till 1908 or shortly after no one was permitted to write even a grade VIII examination unless his application was accompanied by a certificate of good moral conduct given by a clergyman or a justice of the peace.

Jónas graduated from this school in 1906, having learned the English language and passing eleven school

grades in less than eight years of actual school attendance. After four months of teaching in a country school he enrolled in the Matriculation Department of Wesley College to learn Latin, German and Icelandic, for languages had been missing from his high school course. In one year he mastered these sufficiently for entrance to university. From 1908 to 1912 he studied the Arts Course at Wesley College, specializing in History and English. For this combined course he was awarded a silver medal on graduation.

His impression of the principal of Wesley College, Dr. Sparling, is that he was a gentle, kindly man, highly respected. Not till much later did he realize what a strong guiding hand he had over everything at Wesley. (see *Icelandic Canadian*, Winter 1971, p. 59). Now, sixty years later, he remembers such outstanding professors as Jolliffe, Osborne and Dr. Bland (the last named as "an outright socialist"), not for the subject-matter of their lessons, but for their personality, and that they were never content with just teaching facts. Their comments related facts to life in the period taught and to the life of our times. One may well consider the implications of this in the present period when machines tend to replace men as educators.

He remembers that time as a period when the university was facing the issue of whether it should be a group of small affiliated colleges or become one large central institution as it now has. Professor Jolliffe maintained that the smaller colleges could provide more and finer personal development.

This was a time when students of Icelandic origin seeking a university education almost without exception enrolled at Wesley College, and

especially so in the Faculty of Arts, though in their two final years they would take some of their courses at the university. Wesley and the university were then so close that one could run from one to the other in intermissions between classes. At Wesley, instruction in Icelandic was offered from 1901, with Rev. F. J. Bergmann as the first teacher. At the highest number close to fifty Icelandic students were enrolled at one time.

Consequently they formed in 1901 a separate Icelandic Students' Society, which embraced all Icelandic students in Winnipeg, from high schools, such as Winnipeg Central Collegiate, and from the Normal School (for teacher training), as well as from colleges and the university. The presidency, which changed annually and was first held by Ingvar Buason, B.A., was during the time that Jónas recalls held by Haraldur Sigmar, Jóhannes Pálsson, Baldur Olson, Walter J. Lindal, Hallgrímur Jónsson and Jón S. Árnason, most of whom later became distinguished in various professions.

One objective of this group was to raise money for needy Icelandic students, which was, as he recalls, issued in the form of loans, possibly with a limit of \$25, which was then a considerable sum.

Jónas has vivid memories of the lively enthusiasm of this society and its varied projects: discussions, debates and oratorical contests in all of which he took active part, as well as plays. "It was lively! We thought we were on top of the world!" He remembers in particular the play "Hún iðrast" ("She Repents") composed by two of the members, Jóhannes Pálsson and Jón Stefánsson, both of whom later became doctors.

He regards the society as having been, particularly for students from

outside of Winnipeg, "a home away from home. We would have felt more lost in the city without it". It provided a focal point to start from, an opportunity for expression in congenial surroundings. Yet it did not prevent the Icelandic students from joining in the social life of the college, such as inter-class debating and the literary society. Perhaps it even made this easier for them.

His final view of the Icelandic Students' Society is: "We derived as much good from it as from anything else in college."

Elementary schools were then frequently staffed by college or university students and conducted during their holiday season, often from five to six months from May to late fall. During his college years Jónas taught at Marshland near Langruth, Thor in Argyle, and then, after the Jónasson family had moved to Dafoe in Saskatchewan, at Sleipnir in the Wynyard district and Foote near Dafoe.

Pioneer life in the Dafoe district in 1909 had already had the sharpest edge taken off its hardships by the settlers of 1905-06. They had already cultivated considerable land, established farming and in some cases built improved homes. Besides, the railway came through there in that year.

In 1913 Jónas took the six-month Second Class Normal School course for elementary teachers in Winnipeg, at which time Dr. W. A. MacIntyre and Alexander (always known as Alec) MacIntyre were the main instructors. While recognizing the value of insistence on thoroughness, he was shocked after the university courses, to find total emphasis on memorization of facts and absolute insistence on no deviation of method. An example:—"On page 32 there is the name of a scientist. What is his name?" Or, ad-

dressed to a veteran of the German navy in reference to stuffed exhibits for natural science: "On table . . . in room . . . there is a stuffed bird. What is that bird?" German: "I have not even been in that room." Order: "Go and look at that bird!" Exit German, white-faced and seething.

Subsequently Jónas became principal of the Alexandra Elementary School in Brandon and taught all subjects in Grades VII-VIII in one classroom. After two years there he enlisted, in January 1916, in the 108th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

His outstanding impression of this period is that the Canadians were utterly unprepared for war. In the spring of 1914 he had heard a speaker from England warn of the danger of war with Germany and of the need to be prepared for it. This man had barely got a civil hearing and had been contradicted on every point.

Now that it came to army training in Canada, very few were able to give it. He recollects some two hundred men of his officers' training corps assembled at 9:00 a. m. and standing in formation in bitter January weather day after day for almost an hour waiting for an adjutant-general to arrive. When he finally arrived a week or so later some of the men were beginning to come later. He thundered, "This lateness on parade has got to stop! Sergeant-major, take their names!"

Since no place for drill had been provided, the sgt.-major divided the group into seven squads and ordered one man in each to find a place to drill. Among those selected were the Kelly Building and the Broadway United Church. On completion of this course Jónas received his commission as lieutenant.

The 108th Battalion was then organized in Selkirk and trained there during the winter without equipment, but with British veterans of past conflicts in India, South Africa and elsewhere as instructors. The men were housed in hen-houses on a poultry farm near the river bank. The food, however, was good.

One detachment of the 108th, started by Hallgrímur Jónsson, was recruited at Gimli in the spring of 1916 and numbered approximately thirty men. Jónas was in charge there for one month before going to Camp Hughes and remembers staying at the Lakeview Hotel (now part of Betel) and training the men on the grounds north of the school, also addressing the school children on Empire Day by request of Miss Ólafía Johnson (later Mrs. Melan), who was then principal.

By late May the 108th was sent to Camp Hughes for further training. He recollects the entire camp of some 30,000 men being drawn up in a formation over a mile long for inspection by the Minister of Defence, Sam Hughes. He summoned all the officers to the reviewing stand. The men, not sorry to see some of them have to run half a mile, broke out in cheers, at which the minister commented, "Lamentable lack of discipline!" He then addressed the soldiers, devoting his speech to the excellence of the Ross rifle, which he proclaimed superior to any other. This was late in June, but on July 1st the British government discarded the Ross rifle as heavy and subject to heating and jamming.

Shortly thereafter the Duke of Connaught, then Governor-General, held another inspection.

In September, 1916, the 108th was sent to England and stationed in various camps there till about January, 1917. There were then four Canadian

Divisions in France, but because of the heavy replacements in them required by casualties, the fifth division was broken up and joined the others. In this process the 108th was disbanded and joined the Fourteenth Canadian Reserve, which was stationed at Dibgate near Folkestone in the south-east of England, not far from Dover.

On his first leave from there Jónas saw the Lord Mayor's parade in London, with all its pageantry, and he heard light-hearted young office girls in the crowd speaking with affectionate familiarity of their king, "I have not seen George for a long time."

Jónas took a training course at Crowborough, which was near the home of Conan Doyle, the creator of the Sherlock Holmes stories. During this period Sir Conan invited the Canadian officers to his home every Saturday evening. The author was also a doctor of medicine. In his hallway was a large whalebone, souvenir of his period of work as a doctor on a whaling ship north of Iceland. He was a very affable, friendly man. Once he invited the officers to a game of billiards. A Victoria man who accepted the challenge proved no match whatever for Conan Doyle, who played billiards for an hour every morning for exercise.

Jónas Jónasson's career in the army ended with the discovery that he had a rare and progressive eye disease, retinitis pigmentosa. He returned to Canada in May, 1917, and resumed his occupation of teaching. His most memorable experience was at the Pas, where he became principal in 1917 of a newly constructed eight-room public school and taught all subjects in grades VII-IX. This school had been built with the thought that it might replace some small public schools and a Roman Catholic private school. How-

ever, it turned out that the R.C. church authorities would consent to its use by their pupils only if the school were completely partitioned and the grounds also divided by a fence or a wall, and also with recesses held at different periods, to allow no intermingling whatever of the R.C. students with those of other denominations. Since this was not feasible in a provincial public school, half of the new school was vacant.

Not having had a course in French, Jónas tried to arrange with the head of the R.C. private school for an instructor from it to teach this subject in the public school, with pupils to be sent to one of the vacant classrooms for this instruction. His request was affably received, but only on condition that the pupils go to the private school for these lessons, for a Roman Catholic sister would not be allowed to go to a public school to teach classes.

It would appear that ecumenism has made considerable progress since those times, and that most denominations, both R.C. and Protestant, are now far more tolerant.

For a period Jónas took up farming in Saskatchewan, first in partnership with his brother Kristján near Dafoe and then on a Soldiers' Settlement farm near Raymore, which he later rented. He was one of twenty-two veterans who took up parcels of land in this district on loans from the Soldiers' Settlement Board. In 1927 he completed payment of the principal to date and received the compliments of the board on this achievement. But from 1929 on, during the depression and the dust-bowl period, all proceeds went to pay for payments still due and yet did not suffice, till in 1940 the board demanded a quit-claim to the land. Precisely the same fate befell all the other returned men and all

but three surrendered their farms and left. Those three simply refused to leave and the board did not apply force to remove them. It would be interesting to know whether this was a unique or a representative example of what happened to soldier settlers.

After renting his farm Jónas resumed teaching, first as a principal and teacher at Dauphin and then at various other schools. However, as his sight had grown progressively worse he left teaching in 1929 and went into complete retirement for five years.

Six years earlier the oldest of his three sisters, Miss Petrea Jónasson, had purchased a house at 69½ Banning Street which became a joint home for the six unmarried brothers and sisters and their father. This remarkable household, where some of them lived permanently and some at intervals became also a well-known centre of hospitality in which friends and relatives from far and near always found a hearty welcome and a quiet, congenial atmosphere. Here one would meet the dignified, tall, erect father, twice a pioneer, Þórlákur Jónasson. Over the household presided Petrea Jónasson, a cateress by occupation, so expert that when Gimli welcomed Lord Tweedsmuir, then governor-general, she was engaged to prepare a banquet for him. A youthful touch was given by her adopted son Njáll, who had in a sense been adopted by this entire family when he lost his mother. Here too was the beautiful Hólmfríður, the second sister, and the youngest sister, Valgerður, a teacher of such proficiency that at one time pupils who had proved difficult were assembled from various schools in Winnipeg into a special class for her to teach. This she did with entire success, for she found a way to the hearts of these unruly children.

Here three of the brothers also lived whenever their occupations permitted: Kristján, a pioneer of Dafoe; Benedikt, a pioneer of Silver Bay, and Jónas. The married brother, Björn Jónasson, a well-known pioneer of Silver Bay and long-time councillor and reeve of the Siglunes R. M. frequently visited with his family and its connections, to whom this was a home away from home.

Others lived at various times in this home. Among them was Ragnar H. Ragnar, the well-known pianist and conductor, who was their cousin and close friend. When not giving lessons there or playing the piano, he frequently contributed his gay humor and love of debate to the numerous lively discussions over the coffee-cups.

The Loftleiðir enterprise that later was to put Iceland on the map in international aviation may well have had its inception in Winnipeg, and even to some degree at 693 Banning Street. For it was here that one of its founders, Alfreð Eliasson, made his home with a companion, Ásbjörn Magnússon, who, after they had crossed the sea from Iceland, bought a car in New York, drove it all the way to Winnipeg, and arrived there on the first day of summer, 1942. Two other founders, Kristinn Ólsen and Sigurður Ólafsson, who had come in 1941 and lived on the same street, frequently visited him there.

During their stay in Canada they learned the fundamentals of flying from Konnie Johannesson, sup-

plemented by further training with the RCAF, which at the same time employed them as pilots of bomber planes engaged in training practice. In the fall of 1943 they purchased from Konnie Johannesson a plane (possibly a Stinson) for about \$10,000, which they flew to New York and shipped from there to Iceland. From this beginning they later developed Loftleiðir (Icelandair).

After his five years of retirement Jónas found considerable improvement in his sight through operations on his eye done by Dr. Jón Stefánsson to let in more light, and also through a new medicine brought in from Vienna and then used by Dr. Stefánsson for the first time in Winnipeg.

Consequently Jónas resumed work in 1935, this time with the Correspondence Branch of the Manitoba Department of Education, which was then presided over by C. J. Hutchings. During twenty-one years there he marked papers written by students from all over Manitoba, mainly in History and English and particularly in Grade XII. He also gave them a measure of guidance through comments. Besides this, he composed a course in Grade IX Social Studies.

The impression that he left there may best be summarized by a friend and fellow-teacher, well known for his own work with the Correspondence Branch, W. Kristjanson: "Jónas is quite a man. He has many good friends. His co-workers at the Cor-

respondence Branch are firm in their attachment to him."

Besides being a life-long loyal member of the Icelandic Lutheran Church, Jónas made a significant contribution to community life in Winnipeg by helping to found the Viking Club there in 1941-42. He was a charter member and also served as its president for the first two years.

This club was formed to unite members of the various Scandinavian groups, several of which were too small to function separately. In the Viking Club, Danes, Finns, Icelanders, Norwegians and Swedes can preserve common heritage and culture. Jónas recalls that Walter J. Lindal was the guest speaker at the very first dinner meeting and his theme was "The Roots Lie Deep", referring to the Viking heritage. Two or three large gatherings were held annually. Such famous Scandinavians as Peter Freuchen, Captain Mikkelsen and Lauritz Melchior addressed these meetings. The presidency is rotated every two years among the groups and is presently held by Magnús Eliasson.

Jónas retired in 1956. The passing years had left only two members of the Banning Street household, Jónas and his brother Kristján, who both moved to Betel in Gimli in October, 1958. Kristján passed away there in May, 1960, but Jónas has resided there ever since.

At Betel, Jónas has always felt at home and has found the personal care and service there to be of the highest

quality, with a homelike atmosphere and as much personal freedom as can be combined with the management of a public institution. He has also formed valued friendships there.

As inoperable cataracts brought on complete loss of sight, Jónas met the problem in various ways. With a few lessons given by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and a typewriter on loan from it, he learned typing at Betel and makes great use of it.

The radio keeps him in constant touch with current affairs as do articles and books read aloud.

The Institute also supplies a great selection of "talking books", both non-fiction and fiction; i.e. complete books recorded on tape, contained in cassettes which are loaned and shipped free of charge as is the cassette player. Jónas has heard over three hundred of these books, among which are famous classics such as "Les Misérables," Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment", modern fiction, travel, biography and archeology to name a few. Jónas types a synopsis of every book and occasionally narrates these to gatherings such as the birthday parties held at Betel. At these he sometimes also gives speeches and recites poetry.

In all these pursuits he has received much valued assistance, notably from Miss Margaret Sveinsson, former matron of Betel, and from several other friends there to all of whom he is grateful.

A highlight of this period was a trip

to Iceland in 1961 with his brother Björn Jónasson, during which he visited his birthplace of Mývatnssveit and met relatives all over Iceland whom he knew by name but with whom he had had no personal contacts. He has corresponded with several of them since. They travelled widely, stayed two weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Ragnar H. Ragnar at Ísafjörður, and were entertained at dinner by Alfreð Elíasson, where they met the other members of Loftleiðir who had received training in Winnipeg.

His interests are not confined to Betel; he frequently attends meetings in the town of Gimli, takes an interest in all activities there, and is a member of the Gimli Chapter of the Icelandic

National League, whose delegate he has been at annual conventions in Winnipeg more than once.

Had it not been for his visual handicap it is virtually certain that Jónas Jónasson would have gained far more prominence in public life. On the other hand it may well be that what has been lost in the extent of his scope of action has been gained in depth of thought and feeling, in heightened awareness and sympathetic understanding, all of which make a deep and lasting impression on those who know him. They find in him a rare example of a man of high intelligence who masters adversity with quiet courage and dignity.

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### SIGURDSON PLAY ON CBC

Morden poet and writer Paul Sigurdson continues to add to his laurels. The national network of the CBC featured his verse play "Handy Randy and the Child" in its special Christmas Day schedule.

The play as presented is a shorter version of a musical play on which he has been working. Although the setting of the piece is a "small town in Manitoba", the mood and subject matter are universal. It is a kind of modern treatment of the nativity theme. In the story the old caretaker of a church in the town gives shelter to a homeless girl who is about to give birth to an infant on Christmas Eve. By the time the baby makes its entrance into the world the caretaker

(Handy Randy), the minister of the church, and a rather self-righteous parishioner find that their spirits have all been strangely touched by the event. The dialogue is presented in a kind of semi-free rhyme almost reminiscent of a folk-dance, and much of the poetry is in rhymed couplet form. Mr. Sigurdson's talent in both drama and verse showed up to admirable effect in this broadcast.

The program was produced in the CBC's Winnipeg studios by Walter Unger and Dan Wood. The cast featured Evelyne Anderson, George Waight, Viola Cowdy, and Gus Kristjanson (a member of the editorial board of this magazine). —G.K.

## LOUISE JOHNSON

by Ingibjorg S. Goodridge



Mrs. Louise Johnson

A prominent singer in the Icelandic community in Winnipeg and in wider circles.

Most people when they reach the age of retirement feel that their life's work is complete and that the time has come for them to sit back and enjoy the fruit of their labours. Viewing one's life in retrospect can be gratifying, especially when one has been active in many spheres. Somehow, the unpleasant memories and disappointments fade and the happy, satisfying ones, as well as the accomplishments come into sharp focus. This has been the life pattern of countless members of society since the beginning of time.

However, every so often there appears on the horizon someone who has too much vitality and energy to accept this relaxed role: someone who refuses

to grow old: someone who has above-average health and considerable determination. One such person is Louise Thorlakson Johnson. At the time of usual retirement she embarked on a totally new career, which has taken her to numerous states and cities in the United States and to several cities and villages in Canada and has given fresh zest to life.

Louise Johnson was born in Mountain, North Dakota, U.S.A., a daughter of Thorsteinn Thorlaksson and his wife, Hlaðgerður Laxdal. Here she grew up in a family circle composed of two brothers and six sisters. Her homelife was similar to that of so many Icelandic families of that era, a home filled with activity, hospitality and filial love. Somehow, in those days, the lack of material things was never noticed. Life was full of hope, expectation and anticipation. Later the family emigrated to Canada, living first in Selkirk, Manitoba, and then in Winnipeg.

At an early age it was noticed that Louise had an aptitude for music along with a bright personality, an attractive appearance and an abundance of energy. By the time she was six years old, she was singing for the pleasure of others, either all by herself or with other members of the family. Her repertoire and her joy of singing increased with the years and by the time she was almost grown up, she began to consider seriously seeking vocal instruction.



At that time there was in Winnipeg a certain Professor Hotchkiss Osborne. He was the choir conductor at the Methodist Church on the corner of Broadway Avenue and Kennedy Street and had gained a reputation as a voice teacher. It was to him that Louise went to receive her first formal instruction in the technique and art of singing. Professor Osborne had a good sized class of budding vocalists, some of whom later became prominent in Winnipeg musical circles as teachers and performers. After three years of study with him, she studied for some time with Francis Fisher Powers, of New York. On to Chicago she went and enrolled in the Lyceum Arts, where she continued her training with Professor Harrison. She remained there a short time, along with her sister, Mae, for she too was a vocal student.

Upon returning to Winnipeg, she resumed her study under Dr. Ralph Horner and later with Mrs. Thompson. While with Dr. Horner, Louise became a member of the Orpheus Club, which under his leadership prepared and presented Operettas for several years. She sang one of the leads in the Gondoliers and the Mikado and she had the leading role in Iolanthe, three well known works from the pens of Gilbert and Sullivan. In these performances it was necessary to combine the arts of singing and acting. It soon became evident that Louise was possessed of a lively talent for acting which delighted her audiences. Two of these performances, the Gondoliers and Iolanthe, took place at the Walker Theatre, which then was the artistic centre of the city. Many people will remember with nostalgia the Walker Days of Glory and still entertain memories of happy times spent enjoying the musical perform-

ances and theatrical productions in those beautiful surroundings.

Some of these productions were staged by local talent which was of high standard indeed. Others were unforgettable events when great performers of world renown brought their magic to enthral the music and drama lovers of Winnipeg. The third operetta in which Louise was one of the principals, the Mikado, was presented under the auspices of the Army and Navy Veterans and the proceeds were used to aid needy veterans. Besides being a musical treat, this presentation served as real morale booster to the returned boys.

While still a very young woman, Louise Thorlakson was married to a young man of much promise, Alexander Johnson, a tall, handsome Icelander who became a well known and much sought after singer. His beautiful baritone voice was greatly enjoyed by all who heard it. They shared a common interest and an ardent love of singing so soon became popular performers and spent much time on stage and on the concert platform. Alex, also a member of the Orpheus Club, took part in the same productions as his wife.

The programmes of the concerts produced before and immediately after the First World War bear evidence of the discriminating taste of the Icelandic people of Winnipeg and of the excellence of the music presented to the audiences. Mr. and Mrs. Alex Johnson were often among the artists who gave of their talent at various Icelandic concerts, singing solo numbers or duets. This period in the cultural life of the Icelandic community can well be named the Golden Age. Not only were musical entertainments — vocal, instrumental and choral — presented to packed houses but also

dramatic offerings, debates and lectures were the order of the day. Plays from the hands of Icelandic playwrights and operettas in Icelandic were performed with considerable degree of excellence. Here, also, we find the Johnsons doing their part acting and singing to the delight of those present. Louise Johnson had a fine flair for acting. What a delightful time to have been young in the Icelandic community in Winnipeg!

Louise and Alex were very active in the musical life of their church. They were members of the Tabernacle Church, first in the edifice on Furby Street and later in the new church on Victor Street. The minister of the Tabernacle congregation was Reverend Friðrik J. Bergmann, whose sister, Aldis Bergmann Laxdal, was Louise's maternal grandmother. They remained soloists until the congregation was disbanded and the church sold to its present owners, the First Lutheran Church. This happened after the death of Reverend Bergmann. Another well-known musician and teacher, Jonas Palsson, was the organist. The Johnsons later joined the First Lutheran and were members of that choir for some time.

About that time, the Icelandic Choral Society, under the capable and sensitive direction of Halldor Thorolfson, was formed. The programme of its first performance lists, among others, the Alex Johnsons as soloists and duetists. The newspaper reviews of that concert were high in praise of the excellence of the performance of soloists and choir. Two conductors from Iceland, Björgvin Guðmundsson and Brynjólfur Thorláksson, each served for a period of time leading the Choral Society which continued to enjoy the services of the Johnsons. Another guest from Iceland, Bjarni

Björnsson, spent some time in Winnipeg, entertaining. One of his productions was a play staged at the I.O.G.T. Hall, in Winnipeg, in which Louise Johnson had the leading part. Her views showed her to be a sensitive and lively actress.

Another facet of Louise Johnson's active life was her interest in the work of the Jón Sigurdson I.O.D.E. Chapter, as well as the Ladies' Aid of the First Lutheran Church. Beside all these activities, Mrs. Johnson, the mother of four children, including a daughter who died very young and three sons, one of whom passed away many years ago, lead a busy life as wife, mother, homemaker and hostess in her home. This was an active life.

One of Louise Johnson's contemporaries is quoted as saying, "Louise quit singing at the height of her popularity", and quit she did while still a comparatively young woman.

After the death of her husband, instead of becoming a dowager, she embarked upon the career mentioned above and one which she still pursues with enthusiasm and pleasure. When she speaks of it, her eyes light up and her face becomes animated, and it is difficult to believe that she has passed her three score and ten years.

What is this career? Simply, a curiosity about the things of past has lead her research in genealogy and even into history. It all started when she began to wonder about her own and her husband's ancestors. She has now compiled a genealogical chart of their antecedents which reaches far back into time. This required much time, first to research and then to tabulate. Once her interest was aroused, she plunged into research into the background of many famous families both

Continued on page 34

STAG PARTY HELD AT THE MARLBOROUGH HOTEL, JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>, 1930, IN HONOR OF GRETTIR LEO JOHANNSON  
 PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR ICELAND ON JANUARY 8, 1930.



HEAD TABLE, LEFT TO RIGHT – WALTER J. LINDAL, J. WALTER JOHANNSON, K. W. BILL JOHANNSON,, GRETTIR LEO JOHANNSON, EINAR PALL JONSON, ARNI EGGERTSON, JOHN J. SAMSON, LEFT SIDE OF TABLE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM – JOHN EGGERTSON, HANNES J. LINDAL, LINDAL HALLGRIMSON, GUDMUNDUR EINARSON, DR. ROGNVALDUR PETURSSON, GUDMANN LEVY, RAGNAR A. STEFANSSON, BENEDIKT OLAFSSON, BRANDUR ERLENDSSON, GUNNAR ERLENDSSON, FRANK HALDERSON, STEINDOR JAKOBSSON, PALL S. PALSSON. RIGHT OUTER SIDE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM – LOFTUR MATTHEWS, SIGURDUR STURLAUGSON, JOHN EINARSON, VIGLUNDUR DAVIDSON, JONAS J. THORVARDSON, THOR MELSTED, JOHN OLAFSON, DR. JOE OLSON, ADOLPH JOHANNSON, PETUR ANDERSON, SIGFUS ANDERSON, KARL THORLAKSSON, LEIFUR ELLISON, INNER RIGHT SIDE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM – HALLDOR SIGURDSON, JONAS THORDARSON, KARL JONASSON, HELGI JOHNSON, BJORN JOHNSON, BARNEY FINN-SON, JON A. BILDFELL, HAROLD STEPHENSON, WOLFGANG [WALLY] FRIDFINNSON, DON GALLAGHER, NIKULAS OTTENSSON, AGUST SAEDAL, HALLDOR M. SWAN, GUDMUNDUR J. JOHNSON, HAFSTEINN JONASSON.

American and British. This has led her from one library to another in numerous cities and she now possesses reams of handwritten data, a unique private collection. As might be expected one thing leads to another and she soon researched into archeology, ancient history, and of course into Iceland's past, and writes most of it down in her own hand. One document which Louise furnished this writer tells

of the supposed discovery of the fabled city of Atlantis under a vast blanket of volcanic ash on the island of Thira in the Aegean Sea.

Louise Johnson has met and interviewed scores of interesting and fascinating people and you may be sure time does not hang heavy on her hands.

Grow old? She hasn't got time!

### GIMLI MAN AWARDED SHORT STORY PRIZE



W. D. (Bill) Valgardson

W. D. (Bill) Valgardson, winner of the Free Press annual non-fiction award in 1969, flew Dec. 3 from his home in Missouri to the University of Western Ontario to accept the president's medal for the best Canadian short story of 1970.

Bloodflower, the prize winning story was published in Tamarack Review and was then published in Best American Short Stories, 1971.

Previous awards included being the Icelandic poet of the year 1966 at the annual provincial Icelandic festival at Gimli, Manitoba.

In 1968 he won first prize at the Festival of Religious Arts held in Rochester, New York, for his poem, Paul Isfeld—Fisherman. This poem was inspired by the lives of fishermen on Lake Winnipeg. Pulitzer prize winner Anthony Hecht judged that event.

Mr. Valgardson said his book, Anthology of Best Western Canadian Writers, is being published for use as a college-level textbook.

Oberon Press, Ottawa, is planning to publish his complete works in both hard cover and paperback editions. Five different Canadian publishers are printing new short stories.

Mr. Valgardson was born in Gimli in 1939. He attended the University of Manitoba. After a year spent teaching at Pinawa he went on to obtain a further degree in creative writing from the University of Iowa.

He is now a visiting professor at Cotley College in Missouri where he teaches creative writing.

—Lake Centre News

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## The Icelandic National League Convention — 1972

### GUESTS OF HONOR AT THE CONVENTION



Heimir Hannesson



Frú Birna Björnsdóttir

Heimir Hannesson is a prominent lawyer and newspaperman and a public figure in Iceland. He is co-editor with Haraldur Hamar of the excellent English-language quarterly *Atlantica and Iceland Review*.

The convention was held February 17, 18 and 19 in the Parish Hall of The First Lutheran Church.

The convention had an auspicious beginning with the concert sponsored by the chapter of the League, Frón.

The president, Mrs. Hrund Skulason, conducted the concert. She set the tone of the convention by wearing the Icelandic dress, the "upplutur". Mrs. Skulason mentioned the un-

timely passing of a very valued member, Mr. Heimir Thorgrimson, and asked everyone to stand in honor of his memory.

Another of its members, Mr. Jochum Asgeirson, who was treasurer for many years and devoted a great deal of time and talent in affairs Icelandic, has moved to Victoria, British Columbia to take up residence. In appreciation of his long and loyal service

to the organization an illuminated hand-written address, designed and done by Gissur Eliasson, was read by Mrs. Skulason and handed to Dr. Richard Beck of Victoria, who would, on behalf of Fron, present it to Mr. Asgeirsson.

Fron and the Icelandic National League found it necessary to sell their premises, which housed the Fron library and the antiques owned by The Icelandic National League. The books and articles will be stored in Gimli, Manitoba until other arrangements can be made.

The program was an interesting one. Scottish and Irish Dancers entertained with their national dances; Carole Davis sang delightful numbers and was later joined by her sister Julian Thorsteinson and sang two Icelandic numbers. Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson arranged the musical part of the program and was the accompanist for the artists.

Miss Caroline Gunnarsson, editor of Logberg-Heimskringla, who wore the Icelandic dress "peysuföt" was the speaker. Her talk centred around her visit to Iceland during the Christmas season.

The Icelandic National League sponsored the closing concert of the convention on Saturday, February 19th, with Mr. Skuli Johannsson presiding.

Mrs. Elma Gislason, well-known singer and teacher of singing presented "The Festival Opera Group" which she conducts. The accompanist was Alice Nakauchi and the commentator John Patterson. Excerpts from several operas were presented. The opening number was the rousing "Soldiers Chorus" from Faust. The sextet from Lucia de Lammermoor by Donizetti, the duet from "Martha" by Flotow, the duet from "La Traviata"

by Verdi, "The Tomb Scene from Aida" and "The Waltz Chorus" by Faust, were sung. The duet from La Traviata was sung by Joy Antenbring and Jim Franklin, The Tomb Scene was sung by Wayne Little, Gerry Patterson and Kathleen Smith, the duet from Martha was sung by Jack Goertzen and Wolfgang Oeste, the sextet from Lucia de Lammermoor was sung by Barbara Lewis, Wayne Little, Wolfgang Oeste, Jack Goertzen, Jim Franklin and Joy Antenbring; and Jim Franklin was Mephistopheles in the Waltz Chorus by Faust. All the numbers were well received and at the conclusion of their presentation they were given a standing ovation. This group will hold a spring concert on May 18th, 1972 in the Manitoba Theatre Centre.

Other musical numbers were sung by three young ladies, Kathy, Elin and Lorraine Anderson, accompanied by Snjolaug Peterson. Lorraine sang a solo in Icelandic.

Dr. Richard Beck read a poem which he had written specially for the occasion. The speaker was Mr. Heimir Hannesson, editor of Iceland Review and Atlantica.

The Icelandic National League invited other Icelandic organizations to attend a symposium on Saturday morning February 19th, to discuss plans for the 110th anniversary celebration of the settlement of Iceland in 1974 and the 100th anniversary of the settlement of Icelanders in Manitoba in 1975. Interesting and constructive discussions took place. As a result of these discussions a motion was made by Gissur Eliason, seconded by Holmfridur Danielson "to establish a committee including two representatives each from all existing organizations that conceivably wish to participate; and that the Icelandic National League shall take the initial

step in convening such a committee; to add to its numbers". The motion and that the committee shall appoint its own officers and have the power was carried

—M.H.

At the Icelandic Canadian Club Concert —

## Cast Receives Standing Ovation

Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the recent convention of the Icelandic National League was a play presented in the evening hosted by the Icelandic Canadian Club.

The play, "The Golden Gate" by Davíð Stefánsson was based on an English translation modified by the cast, technical crew, and friendly advisors to suit the occasion.

The members of the cast and crew are students of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba and some of their friends.

The modification, acting, lighting, and sound effects showed a remarkable touch of professional skill. The audience was kept spellbound to the end of the presentation at which time they responded with a much-deserved standing ovation. Congratulations to all concerned are in order.

—A. I.



Ken Kristofersson

Director of the play "Golden Gate" put on by students taking Icelandic at the University of Manitoba, and presented at the Icelandic Canadian Club concert, February 18, 1972.

### Cast of Characters

Narrator	.....	Heida Kristjanson
Jon	.....	Cameron Arnason
Old Woman	.....	Kristine Jakobson
The Enemy	.....	Ron Cherney
Saint Paul	.....	Lee Brandson
Lost Souls	.....	Donnalee Arnason
		Patti Hanneson
		Nina Stratton
Virgin Mary	.....	Maureen Arnason

Michael,		Nelson Gerrard
the Archangel		
Angels	.....	Donnalee Arnason
		Patti Hanneson

	Nina Stratton	Costumes	Kathy Arnason
<b>Technical Crew</b>		Programs	Kristine Jakobson
Director	Ken Kristofferson		John Matthiasson
Script revision	Garry Einarsson	Cover Design	Candace Narfason
Audio	Candace Narfason		
Make-up	Janice Arnason	<b>Special Thanks to:</b>	
Lighting	Ken Kristofferson	Mr. Harold Hallson	
	Bill Perlmutter	Keneva Kunz	
	Mic Rio	Mrs. H. Skulason	
Stage and Props	Nelson Gerrard	Prof. H. Bessason	
Golden Gate	Ken Kristofferson	Icelandic Canadian Club	
	Bill Perlmutter	of Winnipeg	

### ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The Icelandic Canadian Club has announced that its Annual Dinner and Dance will be held on Friday, April 21, 1972 at the Hotel Fort Garry, Winnipeg. The featured speaker for the evening will be Hon. Valdimar Bjornson, Treasurer of the State of Minnesota and a man well known as an excellent speaker. His address to the gathering will doubtless be of interest to all who attend.

As well as the foregoing, the usual musical entertainment will be provided and dancing will follow the other events.

Tickets are available from the Icelandic Canadian Magazine, Business Office, from Dori Stefansson and other members of the Club executive. — Tickets are priced at \$6.00 per person and reservations of full tables may be arranged. Special student prices are in effect and a limited number of student tickets may be obtained from student members of the Club.

It is expected that tickets will be



**Valdimar Bjornson**

Guest Speaker at the Icelandic Canadian Club Annual Dinner and Dance.

at a premium so that those interested in attending are urged to buy their tickets early to avoid disappointment.

### THE CANADA-ICELAND FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS FOR 1972 — AND OTHER AWARDS

**The Goodtemplars Scholarship of \$200.00** was awarded to **Miss Kristine Jakobson**, a third year Honours student in English at the University of Manitoba. She will complete her second course in Icelandic this spring. Miss Jakobson is deeply engaged in extracurricular work and has made a number of public appearances in communities throughout Manitoba as a very important member of the "Singing Jakobsons".

**Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship of \$100.00** was awarded to **Mr. Gunnlaugur Sigmar Martin**, an accomplished musician and a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. Mr. Martin is preparing for a degree of Bachelor of Music in performance. Some of his training he has received in Brandon, but he has also pursued his studies in Toronto. In the past Mr. Martin has made a number of appearances and received very important awards.

**A Special Award**, made available through funds given by Hon. Judge W. Lindal, was awarded to **Miss Pauline Martin of Brandon**. Miss Martin is a very promising pianist. She intends to pursue advanced training in piano performances at the School of Music of Indiana University. (This

recipient was selected by Judge Lindal himself).

**The Magnús Estate Scholarship** in the amount of \$100.00 was awarded to **Mrs. Sigríð Carole Davis**, a student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba and the School of Music at the University of Manitoba. Mrs. Davis has received the highest recognition for her performances as a soloist and has appeared at many Icelandic concerts both in Winnipeg and elsewhere.

**A Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship of \$100.00** was awarded to **Mr. Lee Brandon**, a second-year student in the Faculty of Science, University of Manitoba. Mr. Brandon is also a student of Icelandic. He is currently preparing literary texts for publication.

**A Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship of \$100.00** was awarded to **Miss Keneva Kunz**, a first year student in Science at the University of Manitoba. Miss Kunz is a promising linguist whose linguistic interests include the Icelandic language.

**An Icelandic Canadian Scholarship of \$100.00** was awarded to **David Jonason**, a first year student in Science at the University of Manitoba. Mr. Jonason's academic achievements have won

him many awards, and his extracurricular work has been recognized for its high quality.

A Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship of \$100.00 was awarded to Miss Signy Laura Oleson, a first year student in the Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba. Among Miss Oleson's academic interests are Philosophy and Icelandic.

A Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship, made available through funds donated by Mrs. Kristin Johnson — Memorial to Gudmundur Johnson, in

the amount of \$100.00 was awarded to Miss Julian Thorsteinson, a fourth year honours student in English and German literature at the University of Manitoba. Miss Thorsteinson is among the University's most outstanding students. In addition to her main field of study, she has taken both French and Icelandic.

A Canada-Iceland Foundation Scholarship was awarded to Miss Sigrid Johnson, B.A., University of Manitoba, currently a student in the Faculty of Education. An excellent student.

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#### DR. FRED KRISTJANSSON APPOINTED RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Fred Kristjansson, 49, has been appointed director of the Ottawa research station of the Canada department of agriculture.

A native of Winnipeg, he obtained his bachelor of science in agriculture from the University of Manitoba, his master's degree in 1948 from the University of Minnesota, and a Ph.D. from the same university in 1953, specializing in animal genetics.

He joined the animal husbandry division, experimental farms service in Ottawa in 1949. With the formation of the Animal Research Institute in 1959, he was assigned to the genetics section and was appointed chief of the section in 1965. He is internationally recognized for his researches in the inheritance of serum protein poly-

morphism in swine and other livestock.

In 1962 he was appointed a member of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization panel of blood group scientists. He is a member of the editorial board of the Animal Blood Group and Biochemical Genetics, and is an associate member of Track and Field Graduate Studies, University of Guelph. He has been acting director of the Animal Research Institute on several occasions.

Dr. Kristjansson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jakob F. Kristjansson of Winnipeg. He was born and educated in Winnipeg. Married, his wife is the former Lena Gislason, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Gislason, Leslie, Sask. They have three children, Janis, Christopher and Gary.

#### OUTCASTS

by Paul A. Sigurdson

She was fair, and he was dark  
And they sailed in the boat together,  
Blind to the colors of the seas,  
And the spectre-haunted weather.

Bosom to bosom, soul to soul,  
Tangled in love they lay;  
Adrift between two hostile seas,  
Which hissed their craft away.

One sea was white, one sea was black,  
Between, no place to be;  
And passages across the line  
Were swallowed instantly.

But colors melted in their eyes,  
When face to face, and bare,  
Her fingers stroked his gold-black throat,  
His wove her white-gold hair.

But soon the wind's ten-thousand crones,  
Shreiked out to heaven high;  
Man's thunder with a pious peal,  
Raged from his blood-rent sky.

And breakers, pulsing ancient lust,  
Ripped their hull-home with ease, —  
The lovers grafted heart to heart,  
Sank in the loveless seas.

The wind, yet only half appeased,  
It muttered on and on;  
And voices whispered furtive thanks,  
That love's lovers were gone.

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One sea was white, one sea was black  
No refuge in between;  
But man will love and maid will love,  
To purple, red or green.

## The Manitoba Historical Society Centennial Awards

The Manitoba Historical Society contributed to the Manitoba Centennial activities in various ways. One was the granting of Centennial medallions to people who have made a significant contribution to the Province. A Centennial Medal of Merit was conferred upon a small group of twenty Manitoba citizens whose contribution to society transcends the bounds of the Province. These medals were presented in 1970. Judge W. J. Lindal was one of the recipients.

A related project was the presentation of a Centennial Medal. In this category a broad canvassing of the Province at large was undertaken for the purpose of requesting the citizens to indicate those people who they felt were deserving of this special recognition during the Centennial year. "A vast number of nominations for awards were forthcoming from all segments of the populace and in all geographic areas".

Included in the list of 460 recipients of the Centennial medal are the names of twelve persons of Icelandic origin. Their names and the accompanying citations are given below.

**Dr. S. Bardal,**  
Shoal Lake, Manitoba

For unstinting efforts in caring for the health of Shoal Lake area residents, particularly during the depression years.

**Mrs. T. J. Gislason,**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For her part in the organization of the first volunteer group to work in mental hospitals in Manitoba and Canada called "Share".

**Dr. E. Johnson,**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For years of service to the mentally retarded as Superintendent of the Selkirk Mental Hospital.

**Dr. Percy Johnson,**  
Flin Flon, Manitoba

For his work in establishing the medical programme in Flin Flon and also for founding a Blood Donor Group in that community.

**Mr. J. Kjartanson, Sr.,**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For recognition of his significant contribution to the development of Manitoba as a farmer, fisherman and trucker.

**Mr. W. Kristjanson,**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For his many years as a Teacher and Principal in Manitoba, his work with the Department of Education and his contribution in writing a history of the Icelandic people in Manitoba.

**Dr. G. Paulson,**  
Lundar, Manitoba

For his many years as a Medical Practitioner in Manitoba, his untiring efforts on the hospital staff at Eriksdale and his interest in Icelandic culture.

**Mrs. Snjolaug Peterson,**  
Gimli, Manitoba

For her many years of work for her community of Arnes in concerts and choirs and for her capable assistance at the Betel Home in Gimli.

**Mr. S. O. Sigfusson,**  
St. Andrews, Manitoba

For his great contribution to transportation in Northern Manitoba in the operation of the Sigfusson Transportation Company where he

has overcome many dangers and difficulties.

**Miss S. Stefansson,**  
Gimli, Manitoba

For her many years in the teaching profession in Manitoba, her devotion to the needs of her pupils and work in connection with libraries in Gimli.

**Dr. Norman Stephansson,**  
Flin Flon, Manitoba

For his many years of practising at the Flin Flon Clinic.

**Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson,**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For his contribution as Founder of the Winnipeg Clinic and his many years as a Surgeon and dedicated public spirited citizen.

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### "WHALE DRIFT" — ICELANDIC SAGAS AND MANUSCRIPTS

The executive of the Icelandic National League has obtained a few copies of the recently published "Icelandic Sagas and Manuscripts", edited by Jónas Kristjánsson with English translation by Alan Boucher and published by the Saga Publishing Co. of Reykjavik, Iceland. This is an exceptionally worthwhile book to own by those who like to acquire an overall knowledge of the Icelandic Sagas and Manuscripts, for it deals with the following in chapters: A New Land; Gods and Heroes; Quill-pen and Parchment; The Guardians of Norse History; Iceland's Heroic Age; A Miscellany of

Lore; A Thousand Years of Living Literature; accompanied by illustrations, some in color, of the ancient manuscripts. Not only would this book add to the reader's knowledge, but would at the same time provide him with a conversational book of rare excellence in appearance and printing. The cost of this book is \$14.00 postpaid, and can be obtained from the Treasurer, 76 Middle Gate, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba, Canada, or telephone 774-5270, Winnipeg.

Icelanders talk about a "whale-drift" when an unexpected piece of luck occurs.

## The Roots Lie Deep

Mr. Ivan C. Robison of Calgary (formerly of Winnipeg) writes of research he has made into his genealogical background. He finds that far back he is of Norse descent. "The Robison's come of Viking stock—the name was Robisson, and they are a sept of the Gunn (Gunnar) clan!"

The Norwegian settlement in Northern England and Scotland dates back to the ninth century. The first Norse settler on the banks of the Humber was one Grímur, who arrived about 875 A.D., and after whom Grimsby was named. (Grims" is the possessive of Grímur, and *bær* means a residence or a hamlet). Norwegians established themselves in Western Ireland earlier, about 836 A.D. From there they moved in large numbers to Northwestern England. Sigtryggur, a king of Dublin, fled thence in 926 A.D. and made himself temporarily ruler of Northumbria. Eric Bloodaxe (Eiríkr blóðexi), a son of Harold Fairhair of Norway, likewise ruled Northumbria temporarily, but as a vassal of King Athelstan, about the middle of the tenth century. Northmen harried the coasts of Scotland for centuries and at one time ruled a large part of the country, as well as the Western Isles.

Numerous place names of Norse origin have been perpetuated on both sides of the border, some with only a slight change in spelling. Kirggy, in the northwest of England, obviously stems from "kirkjubær", the farmstead or the village of the church. In Gil North's Sergeant Cluff mystery stories such names as Egilsby and Gunnarshaw occur. The "haw" may derive from "haugur", meaning heap, or bar-

row. Scottish place names of Norse origin in Scotland include Argyle (ár gyl — river gully) Bruar (brú—bridge, the possessive is brúar) Dunara (dunar —a hushing, thundering noise; á—river); Inverness (Innranes—inner cape or headland); Selkirk (sel kirkja—the church of the mountain pasture shed).

Some Icelanders and people about to become Icelanders enter into the picture. Auður djúpúðga—Aud the Wise, or deepminded was the wife of Olaf the White, king of Dublin, about the mid-ninth century. A son of theirs, Thorsteinn the Red, in the company of Sigurd the Mighty, conquered the northern half of Scotland, Caithness, Rose, Sutherland, and Murray. After her husband's demise, Aud lived with her son in Scotland. Thorsteinn was slain by the natives, about 888 A.D. In 890, Aud moved with her retinue to Iceland where her father, Ketill Flat Nose, had settled.

Two Icelandic brothers, Thorolf and Egill, sons of Skallagrímur of Borg, in Western Iceland, entered the service of King Athelstan of England. They fought with the king's forces against Scots and Vikings. The two brothers were physically strong and doughty warriors and according to the Icelandic Sagas they contributed in considerable measure to the king's famous victory at Wineheath, or Brunanburh, in 937 A.D.

Leif Ericson—Leifr Eiriksson — the Lucky was blown off course at one time and made port in the Hebrides. There he fell in love with a noblewoman of high rank, but with a long-delayed favorable wind, he sailed away.

The roots lie deep. —W. K.

## The Three Norns, or Fates in Norse Mythology

Further evidence of the persistence of the Norse strain or influence in Scotland comes to light in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. On Dewdney Road in that town there is a sign at the entrance to the grounds of an attractive house —VERTHANDI. What else could this be than the Old Norse —Icelandic *Verðandi*?

Inquiry revealed that the lady of the house is not of Icelandic descent but of Scottish descent, with four generations in Canada.

What made her select this name for her home? "The Scots are but shipwrecked Norwegians", she remarked, euphemistically. Hence her choice of a name from Norse mythology —VERTHANDI.

The three Norns, or Fates, in Norse mythology were Urður, Verðandi, and Skuld. They were thought to determine the fate of people, past, present, and future.

Stanza 19 in *Völuspá* (The Sybil's Prophecy) reads:

Þaðan koma meyjar  
margs vitandi  
þrjár ór þeim sæ,  
es und þolli stendr;  
(Urð hétu eina,  
aðra Verðandi,

skáru á skiði,  
Skuld ena þriðju)  
þær lög lögðu,  
þær líf köru,  
alda börnum,  
örlög seggja.

Freely translated, this reads:

There lived<sup>1</sup> three maidens  
Wise in lore  
In a hall<sup>2</sup> which stands  
Beneath that tree<sup>3</sup>:  
One is Urd,  
Another is Verðandi,  
—They have carved out runes  
—Skuld is the third;  
They establish laws,  
Decided the lives  
Men were to lead,  
Mark out their fates.

<sup>1</sup> thence came

<sup>2</sup> The concept may be "the well", or "the waters", or "the sea".

<sup>3</sup> That tree refers to the world-tree Yggdrasill, mentioned in an earlier stanza.



## The Ice Drift by J. Magnus Bjarnason

translated by K. J. Austmann

It was in the springtime and the snow was thawing.

The River ran from the North to the South. Midway between the headwaters of the River and its outlet there was an enormous Water-fall. This Water-fall was known as "The Falls of the Nations."

At the head of the River there was a Glacier. From time to time Ice would break off from the Glacier and drift in Cakes down the River. Some of the Icecakes were large and some were small. And every time an Icecake broke away a mournful boom rang through the Glacier.

"We shall come back", cried the Icecakes. "We shall come back and fill the gaps."

But the Glacier knew full well that they would never return, for their road ran down to the "Falls of the Nations" and from the Falls of the Nations no Ice-fragments returned.

And the Cakes of Ice were carried by the current to the southward,—south, ever southward!

The current grew stronger, the weather milder and the water warmer.

"We shall come back," said the larger of the Icecakes when they had gone some little distance down the River. But their voice was not as deep as it used to be.

And then they noticed all at once that they were becoming smaller and smaller and that the little Cakes no longer existed,—they had turned to water.

They looked back but they could no longer see their Mother the Glacier.

"We shall come," cried the larger Cakes of Ice, although now they really had become quite small, "Be not

afraid, dear Mother, we shall come back."

And the Oaks that grew on the River's banks smiled. They knew what would happen to the Ice. For centuries they had stood there and every spring they had seen the Ice drift down, just as it did now. But they had never seen an Icecake carried back again, up the stream from the Falls of the Nations.

The current became ever swifter and more urgent the farther they proceeded to the southward. In the distance one could hear the heavy din of falling waters. The Falls of the Nations were near. They fell over a blue granite precipice with the tumultuous roar of a thousand Niagaras.

The Icecakes now were few and they were very small indeed.

"We—shall—come!" the poor little Icicles were crying as they were carried over the brink of the Falls. But their voice was like the sigh of a dying swan, and no one heard it but the Evening Breeze as he passed—for the roar of the Falls of the Nations drowns every sound, even the rumble and crash of thunder.

The Whirlpool below the Falls, the fickle, inconstant Whirlpool danced in a frenzy of joy. By day and by night she ceaselessly whirled along, and wantonly kissed all things that passed,—everything that the Falls hurled over the blue granite boulders she kissed with her luring kiss of Oblivion. But she never heard the Icicles, nor did she ever see them. They had all turned into little drops of water and had become quite indistinguishable from other little drops of water that scurried along in the murky, brown current of the turbulent River.

## BABY TERESA'S DAY

by Art Reykdal

It's a wonderful world I'm about to explore  
As I roll on my stomach all over the floor.  
There are blocks I can play with, a ball I can roll.  
That box in the corner's my ultimate goal.

Here comes my big brother, a grin on his face,  
And soon he'll be jumping all over the place.  
Will he tell me a story? He did that last night.  
Oh, no, I can see he is after a fight.

I know that he loves me, this brother of mine,  
And most of the time we just get along fine.  
Though sometimes he hits me, it's only a game,  
And he'll kiss me next minute. It hurts just the same.

Yes, he's in one of those moods when his rough side appears  
I'll holler at Grandpa to take him downstairs.  
I like him of course. That is easy to see.  
But the whole trouble is he is bigger than me.

Oh, say! There's a paper that Dad hasn't read.  
If I tear it up maybe he'll hold me instead.  
I'll eat up the pieces—my sin's then erased  
And no one will know . . . what a horrible taste!

The sun in the window casts shadowy shapes  
And—oh, I had almost forgotten those drapes.  
Though Mamma gets angry and threatens to spank.  
Here she comes—well, I'll just give them one yank.

That's one thing that's queer about people grown old.  
They always think babies should do as they're told.  
But I like to play. I've a mind of my own.  
There'll be time to be serious after I've grown.

My daddy speaks sharply and tries to look stern,  
 But I stare him down. Maybe some day he'll learn  
 He can't fool me at all with that fierce, vicious look.  
 I know that he's hiding a smile with that book.

But Gramps doesn't bother pretending at all  
 He always comes running as soon as I bawl.  
 He hugs me and holds me up close in his arms,  
 For he knows that he can't spurn my innocent charms.

Well, I guess that's enough. Now my story's all told.  
 It's a long one for someone just seven months old.  
 Here comes Mamma to cuddle me up on her lap,  
 So I'll see you tomorrow. It's time for my nap.

---

### DR. THORVALDUR JOHNSON NAMED A COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF CANADA

Three Manitobans were among eighteen persons whose names appeared on the Canadian Honors list announced in December, 1971. Named among Companions of the Order of Canada were the novelist Margaret Lawrence, Dr. Lennox Bell, dean Emeritus of Medicine, University of Manitoba, and Dr. Thorvaldur Johnson, of Winnipeg, retired plant pathologist who specialized in research work with cereal diseases, particularly rusts. Dr. Lennox and Dr. Johnson received the Order's medal of service; awarded for "excellence in all fields of Canadian endeavor in Canadian life."

Dr. Johnson was born in Gimli, Manitoba. He received his degree in

agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan in 1924 and received his doctorate of science in 1930. In 1953 he was appointed director of the plant pathology division, Dominion Research Laboratory in Winnipeg. He retired in 1962. In 1967 he received an honorary doctor of law degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

In 1962, Dr. Johnson was awarded the gold medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada for his research into control of cereal rusts, including unfolding new knowledge about the genetic variability in the rust fungus. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has won international recognition in his field. —W.K.

## Presevation of Historic Places

The *Icelandic Canadian* is pleased to publish the two letters below. The first, from H. J. (Dori) Stefansson, appeared on the "Letters to the Editor" page of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 25, 1971; the second, from

Hon. James Richardson, Minister of Supplies and Services and Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South. They may well serve as inspiration towards the preservation of historic places.

### NO MARKER AT THE FORKS

Sir: The other day we were quietly pushing up the Red on the luxury ship, the *River Rouge*. As we passed under the bridges, past the towering Richardson Building, I fell to musing on the changes that these banks have seen—the human procession that has preceded us up and down these waters.

Presently we came to the point of land that seems to split the river — "The Forks", to give it its historic name. It is now nearly 240 years since La Verendrye came up the Red River to this spot — the first of the pathfinders of the West. He and his sturdy *Voyageurs* had now paddled all the way from Montreal, a long, long trip by canoe. Like Cortez and his men at Panama, this little group must have "looked at each other with a wild surmise," wondering to what unknown and strange lands this new branch of the river might lead them.

Here they must have paused to consider. Here they cached some of their supplies for the return journey (no convenient restaurants or supermarkets then). From here they pressed onward up the Assiniboine, into hostile

Indian country, "to strive to seek, to find, and not to yield." Hard by this point grew up an important trading post, and later the first settlement, that together were to win the great Northwest and secure it for the new nation that was to be born in 1867.

So this is an historic spot, if ever Manitoba has one, and should be so honored. The junction of Portage and Main, the two historic overland routes, is now fittingly marked. Here the Richardson Tower will serve as a landmark for centuries to come. But our waterways were our highways long before Portage and Main came to follow their winding courses. What have we done to mark the spot that marks the meeting of the waters?

Alas! It is still in the very heart of our great metropolis; but it seems remote, neglected, and forgotten. That lazy summer afternoon as we glided by, a lone angler plied his rod from the point, cut off from the rest of the world by two railway tracks and a mess of weeds and rubble.

That was all that was there. No stately memorial here, erected to honor our trailblazers and pioneers by

the grateful beneficiaries of their labors. No, not even an historical marker!

Is it not time we did something about it?

H. J. Stefansson

★

Dear Dori:

I have intended, long before this, to thank you for sending me a clipping from the Winnipeg Free Press, carry-in the letter which you wrote to the Editor about the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers and agree with you that this is the most important crossroad in our city. Portage and Main, after all, are man-made but the Red and Assiniboine were there long before any of us came on the scene.

The following is a paragraph which I wrote to a friend in Winnipeg over a year ago indicating that I have been thinking about this important location for some time:

"With all these possibilities and prospects in mind and considering the very great importance of the junction of these rivers to Winnipeg, it might be a good idea to hold a national architectural competition using the land on both sides of the river and

having in mind the park, the historic monument, a recreated fort for the Hudson's Bay Company and to set it all off, some imaginative structure like the Husky Tower in Calgary or the Big Arch in St. Louis, all of which could be symbolic of new strength and attractiveness for Winnipeg."

I am certain that something spectacular and worthwhile can be done but it will not be able to take place until after the railway study now underway which, hopefully, will result in the removal of the CNR yards and main line from that area. It has been the railway which unfortunately blocked the development of the Red and Assiniboine. In a sense, however, this has been a good thing because once the railway is out, this space will be open and available for even more imaginative and significant treatment than might have been the case if it had been partially covered from the beginning by other buildings.

I will look forward to talking with you and other interested citizens about this project as time goes on.

Thank you very much for writing to me.

James Richardson



## PAUL SIGURDSON'S "THE ICELANDER"

AT THE MANITOBA THEATRE CENTRE

Paul Sigurdson's 3-act play, "The Icelander", one of the Manitoba Drama Festival plays, was staged at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, May 20th. The play was a success.

"The Icelander" was written and produced by Paul Sigurdson, of Morden, Man. The cast of seven consisted of young people from Morden, with the exception of one member from the neighboring town of Winkler.

The setting of the play is Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1949; at the time when the social impact of the large American occupation force was bitterly resented in Iceland. The theme is Icelandic society, as typified in Reykjavik in transition, together with the impact of the American forces.

Conflict is basic in drama and there are conflicts in the play, intense hostility toward an alien and demoralizing influence and the conflict between generations. This conflict is epitomized in the bosom of one family, making it personal and more painful.

Magnus typifies the old Icelandic way of life, with his love of poetry, devotion to the Passion Hymns of Hallgrimur Pjetursson, keen interest in the newspaper, fondness for chess, his fight to maintain the purity of the Icelandic language, and above all, his upholding of the old, pre-war, simple rural way of life, whatever hardships it might entail, including isolation, poverty, hunger.

The revolt of youth against the domination of the old is exemplified

especially by Chris (Kristjan), a lad of sixteen — "I am sixteen!" He longs to have a well-paid job at the American base at Keflavik and to drive a car, and he rebels fiercely against compulsion by his domineering father to memorize poetry "Damn hymn no. 11", he explodes and rips in two the hymn book containing his memorization assignment

Astrid and Thora are the daughters in the family. Astrid is an air-line hostess who dreams of foreign travel. She brings home a friend, her American airplane captain. This touches off an explosion in the home. Thora the other daughter, loves her father and goes his way, but she is sorely buffeted by the two conflicting forces in the home life. She has a tragic knowledge of the American base.

In contrast with the stubborn autocratic Magnus is his lovely gentle wife Fjola. She is brought up in the old "Verities", but she sympathizes with her children. She loves her husband but in her quiet, steadfast way she stands up to his browbeating.

Skapti, a young truck driver, is an extreme example of the young generation, flip in talk and manner, and lax in his Icelandic grammar and enunciation. He is a relief figure in a serious play.

Of romantic love there is little. Ivan the pilot, is in love with Astrid, but she hesitates at the thought of a complete break with her stormy father, who blasts the American on sight. Real, however, is Fjola's love for her

children. She is the most appealing character in the play.

The setting of the play includes Mount Esja in the background and a Kjarval painting on the wall. Also, there are the traditional Icelandic women's costume, and the organ and the spinning wheel — but are the last named not of the past?

The adjudicator commended the play, as being original in contrast with the other oft presented plays in the Manitoba Festival. The audience, he said, had "the rare excitement of watching a new play". He himself had enjoyed the play.

The play was a success, but it had certain limitations, commented on by the adjudicator. It was half an hour too long, and the characters were one dimensional. The actors, all young people, were strange in the large auditorium and their voices were at times difficult to follow.

Despite these limitations, the play was a credit to the author-director and to the actors. A discerning theatre-goer said: "I have seen the six Manitoba Theatre productions this year, and if I consider this the seventh, I rate it the third among them all."

W. Kristjanson

#### UNICITY COUNCILLOR FOR COCKBURN WARD

Robert Johannson the new councillor for the Cockburn Ward in Winnipeg is a native Winnipeg Icelander. His parents Carlyle Ásgrímur and Vilborg Johannson are from the Gimli and Howardville area.

Mr. Johannson has worked with a firm of Chartered Accountants in Winnipeg and has been associated with the insurance industry in that city. However, he is more widely known for his scholarly interests and achievements. He received his B.A. (Hons.) in English Literature from the University of Manitoba and taught English for a while at that University. Mr. Johannson is a poet and a literary critic whose writings have occasionally appeared in the Icelandic Canadian press. His wife Joan was born in Winnipeg and earned a B.A. from United College and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Manitoba. She has worked as a child pro-

tection officer with the Children's Aid and was an active member of the Citizens' Committee for Medicare. Their daughter Elizabeth is two years old.



Robert Johannson

#### STRONG IS THE BOND OF KINSHIP

Not many years ago, young Chris Oddleifson, of Winnipeg, was a member of a hockey team playing in Rochester, New York State. A young lad came to him and said, "My name is Chris Oddleifson too". At first, Chris thought the boy was kidding, but such was not the case. The boy proved to be Chris Oddleifson, the son of Peter Oddleifson, of Rochester, New York.

How did Peter Oddleifson come to live in Rochester, New York? The story goes back to August (Ágúst) Oddleifson, a promising Winnipeg youth, who was in Third Year Engineering at the University of Manitoba in the winter of 1915-1916. In February, 1916, he enlisted in the 196th Western University Battalion. Over in England, he transferred to a British unit. He was taken prisoner in the German drive against the British Fifth Army in March 1918. He was not wounded and he survived the ordeal of imprisonment. He was liberated at the end of the war and returned home in May, 1919.

He continued his engineering studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A news item in the Manitoba Free Press, June 14, 1922, tells of his graduation from the M.I.T. **Winnipeg Youth Wins Signal Honors in Massachusetts**

Boston, June 13— A prominent young Winnipeg man, August G. Oddleifson, by virtue of his high scholarship today was the leader of the largest class ever graduating in the history of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, numbering 743.

"The Winnipeg youth, Canada's only representative to graduate with

honors, was awarded the degree of bachelor of science from Course 15, of Engineering administration. His credits were unusually high."

Upon graduation August Oddleifson accepted the position of European representative of the Eastman Kodak Company. Eight years later, he established himself in private business in Rochester.

He married and when he was at the age of 42 the couple had two sons, one about three years of age and one an infant. Then, at the age of 42, death claimed August Oddleifson. His elder son, Peter, now resides in Rochester, New York. It was Peter's son Chris, who spoke to his namesake from Winnipeg.

The sequel to this chance encounter is that Peter Oddleifson has got in touch with immediate relatives on his father's side, the Oddleifsons of Winnipeg, and he is keenly interested in gleaning as much information as possible about his father's early life. He has already gained valuable information.

August's father was Sigurdur Oddleifson, of Winnipeg, who was well-liked, and is kindly remembered. He was at one time caretaker of the Jon Bjarnason Academy building, the Acadia Apartments, and the I.O.G.T. hall on Sargent and McGee.

Previous to establishing this Winnipeg contact, Peter Oddleifson had intended to visit Iceland, the land of his father's forebears. He has changed his mind about this, and now plans to visit his relatives in Winnipeg and to see something of Canada. •

—W.K.

## THIS APPLIES TO PEOPLE OF ICELANDIC DESCENT

(From an address by Hon. Robert Stanbury, Minister responsible for citizenship, delivered at the Special Manitoba Centennial Citizenship Court ceremony, May 14, 1970)

We have dreams, plans for our country and our place in it. We want to protect it, preserve it, develop it and share it with others of goodwill. Together we are defining gradually, day by day, our concept of Canadian citizenship. We are wrestling with the challenges of regional aspirations, linguistic and ethnic variety, economic disparities, resource development, environmental protection, control of our industrial, educational and cultural assets. But we recognize that these problems which confront us are also our opportunities — the stuff of nationhood when we apply to them liberally a spirit of goodwill, understanding and common purpose.

Our differences are assets in disguise, if we will only recognize them and embrace them. Language need not divide us, but only give us new dimensions for personal development and communication. Familiarity with more than one language, more than one culture, allows each of us to be more than one person. In this sense a Canadian can be one or two or more individuals within a single citizenship. Recognition of two official languages breaks the unilingual barrier the great Canadian hang-up that one language is plenty and any more is a bit foreign, even offensive. That, I hope, is gone forever. There are no foreign languages in Canada; they are all Canadian. Ethnic organizations and publications help many of our people feel more at home here and give Canada added cultural dimensions. Where else in the world's cities can you taste so

many different living cultures as in Winnipeg, Vancouver, or Toronto? This very diversity of Canadian society, our dazzling mosaic of pebbles from all the world's beaches may be the source of our awakening sense of identity and the energy which fuels our national vitality.

What is a nation? The term has, of course, geographical, social, cultural connotations. But Hugh MacLennan says, "a nation is also a style, the quality of laughter and loving, intimations of immortality learned in childhood, personal and family history and even a national sport . . . Our future existence, or at least the quality of it, will be decided in the decade now beginning. Let it be based upon the acceptance of a proved identity in which we may surely believe".

What is the Canadian style? We are setting it every day, you and I. Together, in English and French and a score of other languages, in miniskirts and in overalls, in farms and cities and fishing villages, in tents and high-rises, in the frozen Arctic and in the vineyards, in factories and artists' studios, in red and white and black and yellow, we are setting the Canadian style. It will not remain constant, static through the next century or even through the 70s. It will be kaleidoscopic, exciting, like the Paris fashions, but it will be "made in Canada" by us. And the equality of life we produce for ourselves, for each other, for our children, we just set the style for mankind.

## BOOK REVIEW

by George Hanson

### ICE and FIRE; contrasts in Icelandic nature.

Texts and pictures by Hjálmar R. Bárðarson, Reykjavik, Icel.

Published by Hjálmar R. Bárðarson, 1971. — 171 p.

\$18.70 (U.S.), postpaid.

★

Iceland is often called a land of ice and fire. The ever present glaciers, the flow of drift ice ("the land's ancient foe"), the recent eruption of Hekla in 1970, and the new island, Surtsey, burst up from the sea by volcanic action a few years ago, well testify to the activity of these two great forces of nature. Indeed, Iceland may be called a land in the making and geologists may see before their very eyes these two conflicting forces which shaped our earth ages ago.

Hjálmar R. Bárðarson, in addition to being the current President of the International Maritime Consultative Organization, with headquarters in London, is also the Icelandic State Director of Shipping. In the midst of a busy and demanding schedule, he has worked eight years in producing this book. He has made many expeditions into the interior of Iceland and

on glaciers, as well as to Surtsey, often in the company of scholars such as Dr. Unnsteinn Stefánsson, oceanographer, and Sigurður Þorarinsson, geologist.

Having owned his first camera in 1930, Hjálmar Bárðarson may still consider himself an amateur, but the magnificent pictures in this book — 205 of them in all and 83 in color — bear the mark of a professional and an artist. These photographs cover a period of over 30 years, from a photograph taken on Drangajökull in 1938 to photographs of the recent eruption of Hekla. Here are found photographs of familiar places, as well as of glacial lakes and wild stretches of the interior which few have beheld.

This work also bears the mark of a scholar. In twenty-eight chapters, the author presents a wealth of information about the formation and function of the various forms of ice (such as drift ice and glaciers) and fire (such as volcanoes and hot springs). Thus this book will interest both laymen — for it is in a language they can understand — and the student of geology. Indeed, anyone who wants to know more about the natural forces which are today shaping Iceland will find this book of great interest and value.

The quality of the book, printed in Haarlem, Holland, is high and the format is attractive throughout. The translation, made by Sölvi Eysteinson, M.A., is excellent.

The book may be ordered directly from Hjálmar R. Bárðarson, P.O. Box 998, Reykjavik, Iceland, although the price (quoted before the recent devaluation of the U.S. dollar) may be only

slightly higher. Be that as it may, the book is a bargain and well worth the price. It is a book to enjoy, to study and to read and re-read.

\* Matthías Jochumsson in his famous poem "Hafísinn" refers to the drift ice as "landsins forni fjandi" (the land's ancient foe).

### THE ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERS THREE HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Three honorary life memberships were conferred at the Icelandic League annual conference in February. Those honored were Mr. Heimir Hannesson, of Iceland, Miss Sigurbjörg Stefansson, of Gimli, and Mr. Jakob F. Kristjansson, of Winnipeg.

Mr. Hannesson, is editor of *Atlantica Iceland Review*, an English language publication of high quality and wide circulation abroad. He was a goodwill ambassador from Iceland to inform western Icelanders about plans for the celebration of Iceland's 1100th anniversary in 1974, and to discuss plans for the centennial of New Iceland in 1975.

Miss Stefansson was honored for her many years of service as a member of the Gimli Chapter of the League, particularly in the processing of thousands of Icelandic books donated to the Evergreen Library by the Icelandic libraries of the area. She has also done

considerable research on other subjects for the League, including work on the oldest Icelandic cemetery in Manitoba.

Mr. Kristjansson is a long-time resident of Winnipeg who has been very active in various Icelandic Canadian organizations, including the National League and the Icelandic Celebration Committee (now the Icelandic Festival Committee of Manitoba), being a past president and Secretary for many years of that organization.

Presentations were made by National League president, Mr. Skuli Johannsson, assisted by League secretary, Mrs. Holmfrídur Danielson.

Presented with life memberships in the League were Snorri Gunnarsson and B. Oscar Howardson of Vancouver and Edmonton, and Walter Johannsson of Pine Falls, Manitoba.

## IN THE NEWS

### MR. AND MRS. RICHARD BECK PRESENT LIBRARY TO UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

The University of Victoria library will receive a 2,500 volume personal library as a B. C. Centennial gift from a noted Icelandic expert and his wife.

Dr. Richard Beck and Mrs. Beck of Victoria will present their library of Icelandic and Scandinavian books to the University in memory of their pioneer parents.

In a statement to D. W. Halliwell, University Librarian, Dr. Beck said, "It is our hope that the presentation of this collection will contribute to future teaching and study in the field of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University of Victoria, a field which is already receiving due attention in a number of Canadian universities."

The library, representing one of the largest personal collections of its kind in North America, will come to the University over a number of years. It consists of volumes covering classical Old Icelandic literature, nineteenth century prose and poetry, and cultural and general histories of Iceland. Scandinavian authors and history

books are included.

Mr. Halliwell said the gift will give the University "one of the leading University collections of Icelandic literature in North America. Up to this point, the University of Manitoba had the only substantive University collection in this field in Canada".

Dr. Beck and Mrs. Beck presented a token volume to the University of Victoria in a ceremony which took place at 3:00 p.m. Thursday, December 16, 1971 at their home, 28 Marlborough Street, Victoria.

Dr. Beck spent thirty-eight years at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota as a professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literature. Mrs. Beck taught in San Francisco high schools for twenty-five years. Born in Victoria, Mrs. Beck was the daughter of Einar and Sigridur Brandson who settled in Victoria in 1887. Dr. Beck's parents were Hans Kjartan and Thorunn Vigfusina Beck of Reydarfjordur, Iceland. Dr. Beck and his mother came to Canada in 1921 following his father's death.

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### A MANITOBA TASK FORCE TO STUDY EDUCATION

The Manitoba Government has announced the establishment of a seven-member task force on post-secondary education. "The purpose of the task force is to survey educational needs of Manitoba in relation to post-secondary education, to assess the adequacy of existing facilities and resources for fulfilling these needs, and to make recommendations concerning the future development of post-secondary education in Manitoba"

"As the rate of change in our society accelerates at an ever-increasing pace, it becomes more and more evident that education in the future will be a life-long process for most of our citizens", explained Hon. Saul Miller, Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Members of the task force are:

Chairman, Dr. Michael Oliver, of Montreal, academic vice-president of McGill University.

Meyer Brownstone, professor of political economy at the University of Toronto and York University.

Miss Kay Sigurjonsson, of Toronto, T.V. hostess and executive assistant to the Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario.

Marino Kristjanson, of Edmonton, ac-

ademic planning officer, Alberta Universities Committee.

William F. Clarke, of Lynn Lake, Manager of personnel and industrial relations with Sherritt-Gordon Mines Ltd.

Miss Sybil Shack, principal of Isaac Brock School.

The biographical sketches of the two members of the task force who are of Icelandic descent, included in the press release, are given below.

**KAY SIGURJONSSON**, of Toronto, received her secondary education in The Pas and holds a bachelor of arts degree and a bachelor of pedagogy degree from the University of Manitoba. Before taking up a career in broadcasting she was a secondary school teacher and worked for the University of Toronto Press. As executive assistant to the Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario her main concerns are education of women and native people.

**MARINO KRISTJANSON**, of Edmonton, academic planning officer for the Alberta Universities Committee, was co-ordinator for the Alberta Task Force in Post-secondary Education. He holds a bachelor and masters degree in chemistry from the University of Saskatchewan and a doctorate from McGill University. Prior to assuming his present position he was a professor of chemistry, and later director of extension, with the University of Saskatchewan.

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Dr. Wilfred F. Sigurdson

Dr. Wilfred F. Sigurdson, 375 Shelley St. graduated in Psychiatry in May 1971, and in November obtained a Fellowship in Psychiatry in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons. Last spring he entered an essay in a national competition among students of psychiatry and won first prize of \$500.00 plus \$500.00 for his hospital, Winnipeg General. Wilf is now on staff at the Psychiatric Institute and the University of Manitoba. He is the elder son of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin E. Sigurdson of Oak Point. Dr. Sigurdson is married to the former Elaine Marilee Shelford, M.Sc. She taught microbiology in 2nd year Medicine 1965-67, and now teaches part time at Grace Hospital. They have two daughters, Debbie age 4 and Andrea, 3.

★

#### J. G. LAXDAL COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

J. G. Laxdal has been appointed community affairs specialist with the Manitoba department of agriculture. Raised at Arcola, Sask., is a graduate

of the Manitoba Teachers' College and of the University of Michigan with an arts degree. He has been community schools co-ordinator with the Pelly Trail school division, also in the same post with the Seven Oaks school division and a teacher in the Charleswood district.

★

#### PROFESSOR FRANK THOROLFSON CHANCELLOR OF THE ROYAL HAMILTON COLLEGE OF MUSIC



Professor Frank Thorolfson

Professor Frank Thorolfson, formerly of Winnipeg, now of Hamilton, Ontario, was installed as Chancellor of Music, January 31, 1972.

When in Winnipeg, Professor Thorolfson conducted the First Lutheran Church Choir and founded the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce Orch-

estra and Choir. He was appointed Director of Music at McMasters University, Hamilton, Ontario, in 1959 and has been active in musical circles in that city.

★

### REPRESENTATIVES FROM ICELAND ATTEND ANNUAL MEETING OF NATO PARLIAMENTARIANS IN OTTAWA

When Canada was host in Ottawa to an annual meeting in 1971 of Parliamentarians who are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization the non-partisan representatives from Iceland were:

Head of the Delegation—Mr. Fridjon Thordarson

From the Althing were: Mr. Bjarni Guðbjörnsson, Mr. Geir Hallgrímsson and Mr. Petur Petursson.

They were entertained by Mrs. M. E. Lahey, Consul-General in Canada for Iceland and also by Senator and Mrs. Benidickson whose guests, at short notice, included Mayor Fogarty of Ottawa because Mr. Hallgrímsson, in addition to being a Parliamentarian, is Mayor of Reykjavik. Other guests included, besides Mrs. Lahey, officials from the Department of External Affairs, Mr. J. P. Sigvaldason recently Canada's Ambassador to Norway and Iceland, former Chief Justice of the Exchequer Court and Mrs. J. Thorson, several Canadian Members of Parliament and Senators who were members of the Nato delegation.

★



Pauline Una Martin

Miss Pauline Una Martin daughter of Halldor and Lilja Martin of Brandon, formerly of Hnausa, Man. won the Jon Sigurdson Chapter IODE Music Scholarship last fall. She has attained her ARTC in piano performance and practical, and will finish her theory requirements this spring. She

has had consistently high marks and her music teacher, Prof. Gordon McPherson has recommended that she go to the University of Indiana to major in piano performance after she finishes her Grade XII at Neelin Collegiate, Brandon.

Pauline also won second prize in the Jewish Women's Musical Club Artists of Tomorrow competition. Her brother, Melvin Martin won first prize in the instrumental section. He is a violinist. Pauline and Melvin were heard in recital February 8, in the Eaton's Assembly Hall, together with other winners of the Jewish Musical Club competition.

★

### A BALDUR GRADUATE

Allan Oliver Thorleifson Jr. received his B.Sc. (Mathematics) degree from the University of Winnipeg in October, 1971.

Allan is the eldest son of Allan O. Sr. and Thora S. (Johannesson) Thorleifson, of Baldur, Manitoba.

Allan is employed by the Manitoba government.

★

### PAINTINGS BY AN ICELANDIC ARTIST ON DISPLAY IN WINNIPEG

Paintings of Miss Blaka Jónsdóttir of Reykjavik, Iceland, were on display at the Patterson Galleries, 306 Kennedy Street, Winnipeg, for several days in January. The following is an excerpt from Coffee Break, in the Winnipeg Free Press.

"Miss Jónsdóttir is a most interesting woman. She was translator for 10 years for the American consulate

(later a legation) in Iceland and was private secretary to the president of Iceland, Asgeir Asgeirsson, for 15 years. After his resignation, she joined the staff of the ministry of foreign affairs and was sent to Moscow, getting a leave of absence to nurse her ill mother in Iceland. It was while she was taking care of her mother that she turned to water colors as an escape hobby and discovered an unsuspected talent. Hers are mood paintings of nature themes".

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**HYDRO**



### LEONARD VOPNFJORD ELECTED PLANNING ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN

Leonard Vopnfjord, of Winnipeg, has been elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the Winnipeg branch of the Community Planning Association of Canada.

★

### DR. M. J. SNIDAL PRESIDENT, MANITOBA DENTAL ASS'N

Dr. Marino James Snidal, a Winnipeg dentist and lecturer in dental anatomy at the University of Manitoba has been elected President of the Manitoba Dental Association for 1972. The membership of the Association is three hundred.

Dr. Snidal is the son of Dr. Jack Snidal of Winnipeg and Mrs. (Anna) Snidal.

★

### W. D. VALGARDSON'S DOUBLE HONORS

Bill Valgardson's book of short stories **Bloodflowers** will be published in July, 1973. These stories have a Manitoba setting, including Gimli, Riverton, and Winnipeg Beach.

Simultaneously comes the news that Mr. Valgardson has been promoted to be Assistant Professor.

The Icelandic Canadian congratulates him on his success.

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We regret that Ed. Sigurjonsson has had to resign from his position as Advertising Solicitor for The Icelandic Canadian magazine, due to a health condition.

We welcome his successor in this position, P. Valdi Reykdal, of Winnipeg.

★

### SENIOR DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Norman S. Bergman, of Winnipeg is a Senior Development Consultant with the Manitoba Department of Industry and Commerce.

★

### CORRECTION

In the article "The Icelanders on Vancouver Island" by Dr. Richard Beck, in the Winter issue, page 22, paragraph 5, line 2, after **seemed**, add **destined**.

★

### THE LEIF EIRIKSSON CLUB OF CALGARY

An Edmonton publication, the Scandinavian Centre News, published by the Scandinavian Centre Co-Operative Association, carries an account of the Leif Eiriksson Club of Calgary.

The executive of the newly-formed Leif Eiriksson Club is as follows:

President—Sigurjon Austman.  
Members— Art Einarson, Margaret Gippert, Ruth Hillard, Mrs. K. Gislason, Cliff Martinson, Dr. and Mrs. Olafur Mixa, Mrs. Rose Olsen, Art Reykdal, Gene Sigfusson and Mrs. W. Wyers.

The first general meeting of the Leif Eiriksson Club of Calgary was held at the University, June 17, when Dr. Olafur Mixa, a general practitioner from Reykjavik, who is taking post-graduate studies in Calgary, showed slides of Icelandic scenes with brief historical sketches to describe their significance.

To mark Iceland's national day, Mrs. Mixa appeared clad in **Skautbúning** (Icelandic festive costume) and was acclaimed Fjallkona of the evening. To round out the program, Art Reykdal recited some original verse and Icelandic songs were sung, some of these in English translation.

Still in its infancy, the club already has 50 paid-up members. The second general meeting was scheduled for October.

★

### NEWS FROM ICELAND

#### The Zonta Club of Reykjavik Celebrates its 30th Anniversary

There are two Zonta Clubs in Iceland, one in Reykjavik and one in Akureyri. The Reykjavik Club observed its 30th anniversary on November 16, 1971. This Club, which has 38 members, dedicates its services to deaf and dumb people, especially children. The Akureyri Club has

established a museum in memory of Jon Sveinsson, priest and author (Nonnahús).

★

#### Judo in Iceland

Judo has been practiced in Iceland since 1958. In 1967 the Judo Club of Reykjavik was founded. The chief promoter of Judo in Iceland has been Sigurður H. Johannsson.

### P. T. GUTTORMSSON

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**Hotel Fort Garry**

### INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Academy Road Service .....	1	Manitoba Hydro .....	Cover
Arlington Pharmacy .....	7	Manitoba Sugar Co. Ltd. ....	57
Asgeirsons Ltd. ....	4	McKague Sigmar Co. Ltd. ....	4
Bardal Funeral Home .....	Cover	McLean, J. J. H. Co. Ltd. ....	61
Beaver Moving and Storage .....	3	Nells Flower Shop .....	7
Bjarnason, Sera Jon .....	1	North Star Co-op .....	7
Burns Food Ltd. ....	Cover	Reykdal, P. Valdi .....	58
Dept. of Ind. and Commerce.....	2	Richardson and Company .....	5
Duffys Taxi .....	7	Roberts and Whyte Ltd. ....	4
Eatons of Canada .....	Cover	Selkirk Funeral Chapel .....	7
Einarson Enterprises .....	Cover	Sigfusson Transportation Co. Ltd....	3
Gilbart Funeral Homes .....	4	Sigurdson Fisheries Ltd. ....	7
Gunnlaugson, Lloyd, Plastering .....	61	Sigurdson, Dr. L. A. ....	4
Guttormson, P. T. ....	63	Tallin and Co. ....	1
Hotel Fort Garry .....	63	Thorarinson, S. A. ....	7
Icelandic Airlines .....	8	From a Friend .....	4
Investors Syndicate .....	5	Viking Printers .....	7
John Leckie Ltd. ....	3	Western Elevator and	
Kristjanson, Dr. G. ....	7	Motor Co. Ltd. ....	5
Labatts Manitoba Brewery .....	6	Western Paint Co. Ltd. ....	3
Malkin, Drs. C. and S. ....	7	Winnipeg Hydro .....	60

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