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AND SET THEIR COURSE TO ALL THOSE, FAR AND NEAR,
WHOM I HOLD DEAR.

THE GREETINGS WOVEN IN MY SONG
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AND IN THEIR FLIGHT
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The Icelandic Canadian

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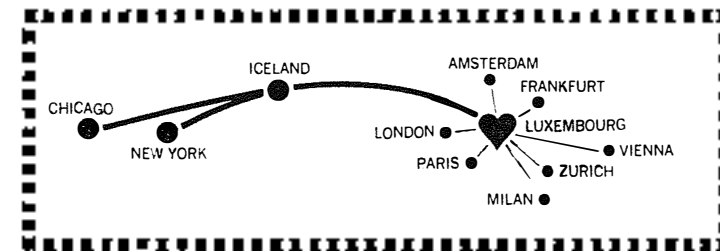
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EDITORIAL:-

Canada Iceland Centennial Conference

The well-publicized Canada Iceland Centennial Conference, with its theme "The Icelandic Tradition in a Multicultural Society", was held in Winnipeg, in the Convention Centre, October 3rd, 4th, and 5th. The purpose of the Conference, which was held on the centennial of the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in Manitoba, October 11, 1875, was to clarify our thoughts regarding the present position of the Icelandic heritage in a mainly English-speaking society and its preservation in the future. The Conference was sponsored by the Canada Iceland Foundation of Winnipeg, along with many other organizations in Manitoba.

A well-planned, comprehensive program, indicative of dedicated work by many people, featured several able and distinguished speakers, foremost authorities on Icelandic studies and literature, from Iceland, England, the United States, and Canada, as well as numerous other activities.

An exhibit of paintings by Winnipeg-born artist Emile Walters included 36 of his pictures. Many of his paintings have been acquired by galleries in several countries.

Services in Icelandic and English were conducted by the Bishop of Iceland the Most Reverend Sigurbjörn Einarsson, in the First Lutheran Church, with a Unitarian minister, Dr. Philip M. Petursson, taking part in the service.

The Male Voice Choir of Reykjavík (Karlakór Reykjavíkur) performed in Winnipeg, at the Playhouse Theatre, and in Brandon and at Lundar, with

several appearances in connection with the centennial cruise on Lake Winnipeg. Theirs was an outstanding contribution to the Conference.

A concert at the Manitoba Theatre Centre featured a special convocation of the University of Winnipeg, where an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on His Grace, the Bishop of Iceland. Two bronze plaques commemorating fifty years of instruction in Icelandic, at Wesley College, 1901-1926, and at the University of Manitoba, were presented to Dr. H. E. Duckworth, President, University of Winnipeg and Dr. Ernest Sirluck, President, University of Manitoba. Eric Wilson, the talented young Winnipeg musician, now in New York, gave a very fine cello performance, accompanied by his mother, Mrs. Thelma Wilson. The 75-member Icelandic Centennial Children's Choir, conducted by Elma Gíslason made their contribution to the program. Hon. John Munro, Federal Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, was the guest speaker.

There was an impressive luncheon at the University of Winnipeg, where His Excellency Haraldur Kroyer, Ambassador of Iceland to the United States and Canada was the guest speaker.

There was a guided tour of the University of Manitoba, where Icelandic historical and literary works from the Icelandic Library were on display.

A noteworthy feature of the Conference was the interest in it of people in Iceland. Even after the over 1400 visitors from Iceland at the Festival at Gimli last August, some 100 came

SPEAKERS AT CANADA ICELAND CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE



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PICTURE UNAVAILABLE

DR. DAVID ARNASON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CANADIAN LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA.

to the October Conference, including the forty-member *Karlakór*.

People from far and near attended the Conference, testifying to the vital interest in the Icelandic heritage. There were conference members from coast to coast, from New York, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Moorhead and Hopkins, Minnesota; Grand Forks, Grafton, Edinburg and Upham, North Dakota; Salt Lake City, Utah; Point Claire, Quebec; Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, and Windsor, Ontario; Winnipeg, Gimli, Sandy Hook Arborg and Oak Bank, Manitoba; Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta and Victoria, B.C.

A Dutch lady, now of Windsor, Ontario, came because of her interest in Icelandic literature. Altogether, probably over 500 visitors attended the Conference events.

Post-conference events, but very much a part of the centennial commemoration, were the cruise on the *MS Lord Selkirk II* on the Red River and Lake Winnipeg, following the path of the pioneers of New Iceland, and the presentation of the impressive cantata composed by Professor Hallgrímur Helgason, based on the poem "Sandy Bar" by Guttormur J. Guttomson in a special concert by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonic Choir, in the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall, on October 12.

Invited guests at the Conference were Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, from Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and Dr. Richard Beck, from Victoria, British Columbia.

The following are some of the observations and suggestions brought forward by the Conference speakers regarding the preservation and promotion of Icelandic studies.

Language is the most powerful factor in the preservation of an ethnic

identity in our society. Other factors are churches, higher schools, newspapers and periodicals, and societies. Here *Logberg-Heimskringla*, *The Icelandic Canadian*, and *The National League* were specifically mentioned.

The high rate of intermarriage among the people of Icelandic descent on the continent militates against preserving the Icelandic identity. Also the Icelandic people have been readily assimilated into the wider society. Icelandic ethnicity is not divisive.

Nevertheless, the consensus was that there is a new growth of interest among the younger generation of today in their Icelandic descent and heritage.

Numerous classes in Icelandic studies have been organized recently in some rural communities, after a lapse of many years. This includes at least five schools where Icelandic is taught as an option.

New texts in the study of Icelandic are being prepared at the University of Manitoba.

Translations from the Icelandic to English are very important, with the understanding that poetry loses much in translation.

The use of radio, television, and computers in instruction in Icelandic was advocated, including the use of films from Iceland.

The use of visiting teachers from Iceland and the exchange of Icelandic and North American Icelandic students should be encouraged; also the exchange of writers, poets, singers and artists.

The importance of group tours to Iceland was stressed. The pattern has been set by the Norwegian people in North Dakota, with their well-organized and highly successful tours to Norway in great numbers. (It is to be noted here that Arborg, Manitoba has

provided an example of an exchange of groups of young people between specific places in Iceland and Canada).

Provision of scholarships for students of Icelandic is important.

Ethnic studies in schools should be promoted.

The writing of local histories of Icelandic communities should be encouraged.

Preserve the experiences of ordinary people.

Encourage the formation of local Icelandic societies.

Promote the inclusion of books in the field of Icelandic subjects in general libraries.

Take a look at the structure of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba with a view to broadening its scope.

A wider view of the people of Icelandic descent in America was brought forward with the concept of inter-ethnicity.

An interesting factor of special significance emerged at the conference. This was the number of others than of Icelandic descent who have become interested and even prominent in the field of Icelandic studies and literature. Of those present, first and foremost must be Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, who showed his keen interest in this field as far back as the year 1930, when he published a book of his translations of Icelandic poetry, ranging from the Old Norse to current Icelandic Canadian. Another is Dr.

Peter G. Foote, of London University, who is a master in the field and is at present assisting in the translation of the book of Old Icelandic laws *Grágás* into English. He gave an inspiring address at the Conference, as did Dr. Einar Haugen, of Harvard University, and Dr. Arne Brekke, of the University of North Dakota, both of Norwegian descent.

Very inspiring, too, is the fact that at the University of Windsor, Ontario, the Librarian, Miss Joan Magee teaches Icelandic to a class of ninety.

Bishop Sirgurbjörn Einarsson's presence on the cruise added greatly to this pleasant and memorable event. His observation on the cruise that it was full of surprises beyond all imagination may be said to apply to the conference and the cruise both. Also his saying, "Others have labored that we may enter into the harvest" expresses perfectly the tribute we owe to the pioneers of one hundred years ago who preserved and passed on to succeeding generations the heritage that was the theme of the Conference of October, 1975.

The Centennial Conference of October, 1975, was like climbing a hill and from there viewing the past and the present and envisaging what to do to shape the future of the Icelandic tradition in its multicultural North American society.

—W. Kristjanson



Mattie Halldorsen

Voyage in the wake of Icelandic Pioneers

The Canada Iceland Centennial Conference arranged a post-conference event on the MS Lord Selkirk, from October 6 to 10, 1975. The cruise was charted to visit the places where the Icelandic pioneers had lived and worked. We went down the Red River from Selkirk to Lake Winnipeg and stopped at Gimli, Hecla Island and Berens River.

We set off from Selkirk on the Monday afternoon, October 6. The weather cooperated in every way. People were out on deck before breakfast to savor the balmy breezes of the lake and to take in the beautiful scenery along the way. It made a friendly atmosphere.

Passengers, who numbered about 65, came from far and near — Icelandic stewardesses and pilots from Viking Airship, Ottawa, Chicago, British Columbia and North Dakota. The Most Reverend Sigurbjörn Einarsson and frú Magna were passengers. Senator William Benidickson and the Honorable Joseph T. Thorson, former president of the Exchequer Court of Canada, were aboard. Ten students were invited to be on the cruise.

The meals were excellent. There was entertainment every afternoon and evening. Games were played and prizes given. The winner of the "Mad

Hatters" was Dr. Larus A. Sigurdson, for his hat labled "Dr. Quack" with all the pills available very much in evidence.

The stop at Hecla Lutheran Church in the Hecla Island Provincial Park was most impressive. Carpenters were busy doing some repair work on the roof of the church. When we entered the church Mrs. Pearl Johnson, soloist at the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, sat down at the old organ and played one of Hallgrímur Pétursson's Passion Hymns. Everyone joined in and sang the 9th verse of Hymn number 349 "Vist ertu Jésu, kóngur klár". Mrs. Hrund Skulason, librarian of the Icelandic section at the University of Manitoba, had asked His Grace Bishop Einarsson to offer a prayer in memory of the pioneers. While the history of the settlement is almost at an end it is one of the focal points in the history of the pioneers in Manitoba. The Bishop mentioned the cemetery at the church, noting that many of the graves are unmarked and that the crosses fashioned from branches of trees carry the names of pioneers who lived in the district: He said: "We are here to remember them and thank them for their part in making the settlement a living memorial."

In 1930 at their convention in Hecla, the Icelandic Lutheran Synod presented a Bible to the Lutheran Church there. All the pastors who had served the parish had written their names in the Bible. On this day His Grace Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson inscribed his name.

The Tourist Bureau of the Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs of the Provincial government presented two plaques, one in Icelandic and the other in English, to the community in honor of the pioneers. It is dated October 7, 1975, and reads:

"... part of the Icelandic Cultural Conference the Bishop of Iceland

unveiled this plaque to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the 285 Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg on October 11, 1875".

Mr. Helgi Jones, in accepting the plaques on behalf of the community, said: "We still own this island although it is now a Provincial Park and only a shadow compared to the thriving Icelandic community of former years when 500 people made their home there. But one thing we will always cherish with pride are the memories of our forefathers who pioneered this little island and overcame all difficulties."



MYSTERY OF AN ICELANDIC CHEST

A letter from which the following is an excerpt was received from Mrs. James Stevenson, of Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1974. The account of the decorated Icelandic chest and its history is worth recording. —Ed.

Having recently purchased a decorated chest which came from Iceland to Canada some hundred years ago, I am interested in learning about the background of these chests, e.g. there are two initials in flowing script on either side of the lock. Square wooden

pegs were used in construction. What sort of paint was used? To have survived an outdoor period during the smallpox epidemic at Gimli, and to have ridden on an oxcart that stuck in the mud where Winnipeg now stands, and finally to travel to Saskatchewan—speaks well for the paint and the painter. Floral designs are still visible on front and ends!

Your comments would be greatly appreciated.

Mrs. James Stevenson



BISHOP SIGURBJÖRN EINARSSON HONORED



Left to right: Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, Most Reverend Sigurbjörn Einarsson, Bishop of Iceland, and Dr. H. E. Duckworth, President, University of Winnipeg

The Most Reverend Sigurbjörn Einarsson, Bishop of Iceland, was honored by the University of Winnipeg at a special Convocation at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg, October 5, 1975. His Grace received the honorary degree, Doctor of Divinity.

The event was a part of the Canada-Iceland Centennial Conference, held October 3-5.

Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson was born at Steinsmýri, Meðalland, Iceland, in 1911, and took his early edu-

cation at the Grammar School of Reykjavík, followed by studies in Theology and Education. He was awarded the M.A. degree in 1937 from the University of Uppsala, Sweden, upon completing studies in Comparative Religion, Greek and History of the Ancient World. He received the B.D. degree from the Theology Faculty of the University of Iceland in 1938, the same year that he was ordained pastor in the Church of Iceland.

Following further studies at Uppsala in 1938 His Grace was appointed pastor in Hallgríms congregation, in Reykjavík, in 1941, and in 1943 he took a post as lecturer in Theology at the University of Iceland. He was promoted to full professor in 1949 after additional university studies at Cambridge, England, in 1945, and at Basel, Switzerland, in 1947-48. He was appointed Bishop of Iceland in 1959.

His Grace is the author of ten publications, five translations, and many scholarly articles in professional journals and periodicals. He acted as editor of *Viðförli*, a theological periodical, 1948-54.

His Grace has served on important committees of the Lutheran World Federation, and made a rich contribution to the deliberations of the World Council of Churches. . . His interests are varied and wide-ranging — liturgy, education, music, preaching and translating. His publications include the following: "The Church of Christ in the Sate of Hitler", "The Religions of India", and "The Religions of Mankind".

—(The last paragraph is based on Dr. George Taylor's citation upon the presentation of the Honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.)



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GUTTORMUR J. GUTTORMSSON

By Richard Beck

In the death of Guttormur J. Guttormsson at Winnipeg, Manitoba, on November 23, 1966, not only the Icelanders in America but the Icelandic nation as a whole lost a highly gifted and strikingly original poet and personality. Generally, he was recognized as ranking next, among Icelandic poets in the Western World, to the great poet Stephan G. Stephansson. And Guttormsson had the further distinction of being the only major Icelandic poet writing in Icelandic to have been born on North American soil.

The son of pioneers who had come to Canada in 1875, he was born November 21, 1878, at their farm home at Icelandic River (now Riverton) in the New Iceland (Nýja Island) district of Manitoba, and grew up in that frontier community on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

His parents, Jón Guttormsson and Pálína Ketilsdóttir, were talented people with cultural and literary interests. His mother, who belonged to a well-known family in Eastern Iceland, possessed considerable verse-making ability, and original poems of hers appeared in the first Icelandic papers published in America.

Like their fellow pioneers in the New Iceland settlement, Guttormsson's parents had to fight epidemics, crop failures, and poverty during the early years, and these and other adverse circumstances undermined their health and led to their untimely death. The future poet was thus moulded during

his formative years by the deep-rooted Icelandic cultural atmosphere of his childhood home as well as the social environment and rigors of pioneer life. Later these influences were to find authentic and memorable expression in his poetry.

Orphaned at the age of sixteen, he was left to fend for himself and for several years had to earn his living by manual labor of various kinds. Then he homesteaded in the Shoal Lake district of Manitoba where he farmed for a number of years. There, in 1904, he married Jensína Daníelsdóttir Sigurdson, the charming daughter of Icelandic pioneers, to be his worthy and inspiring helpmate for more than half a century. The Guttormssons became the parents of six children. In 1911 the poet bought back his cherished parental farm at Riverton, and farmed there until his death (though during the last few years after his wife died he spent some of the winter months with members of his family in Winnipeg).

From the foregoing it is obvious that his formal schooling was very limited. As a matter of fact, he did not get beyond the sixth grade. In spite of this and the time-consuming labor of wresting a living from the soil to provide for a large family, he succeeded admirably in making up for his limited early schooling by extensive and discriminating reading, not only in Icelandic literature, past and present, but also in European, Canadian, and Am-

erican literature. An illuminating firsthand account of his reading is to be found in Dr. Watson Kirkconnell's article "A Skald in Canada" (The Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. XXXIII, 1939).

Thanks to Guttormsson's family and the encouragement of Professor Haraldur Bessason, the poet's rich and significant private collection is now a special section of the large Icelandic Library at the University of Manitoba. Last summer it was formally dedicated by Iceland's President Ásgeir Ásgeirsson when he came to Winnipeg during his official visit to Canada.

Guttormsson's literary achievements are indeed remarkable in the light of his circumstances. His productivity is affirmed by his many published works, including a volume of one-act plays, *Tíu leikrit* (Ten Plays, Reykjavík, 1930), and the following collections of poetry: *Jón Austfirðingur* (John from the East Fjords 1909); *Bóndadóttir* (A Farmer's Daughter, 1920); *Gaman og Alvora* (Jest and Earnest, 1930), which contains new poems as well as the bulk of his earlier works; *Hunangsflugur* (Honeybees, 1944); *Kvæðasafn* (Collected Poems), 1947, containing all his previously published collections together with some new poems; and *Kanadaþistill* (Canada Thistle, 1958). The last two were published in Reykjavík; all the earlier ones in Winnipeg.

With his first collection, *Jón Austfirðingur*, Guttormsson established himself as an uncommonly gifted poet. In a series of poems characterized by graphic description, deep insight, and commensurate sympathy, he interprets the life and bitter struggle of the pioneer Icelandic immigrants against overwhelming odds drawing on his personal knowledge to do so. The

pioneer theme is recurrent, climaxed in his inspired poem "Sandy Bar," named after a pioneer Icelandic settlement and graveyard on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, not far from Riverton. With this noble poem, in which penetrating thought, understanding, and mastery of form go hand in hand, the poet has erected a lasting literary monument to the Icelandic pioneers in his native district and, in a wider sense, to Icelandic pioneers elsewhere in America, although none of these faced the same heart-rendering adversity as that on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. This much admired poem is available in several English translations, including one by Dr. Kirkconnell in his study of the poet, and another by Paul Bjarnason in his collection *Odes and Echoes* (Vancouver, B. C., 1954). The reader is referred to these, as the poem is too long to include here, and should be read in entirety for full appreciation. Let it be added, that both of these translators retain the meter of the original, and Bjarnason also keeps the alliteration, maintaining the sonorous quality of the original poem along with its arresting theme. It may also be noted that the poem written in the enchanting verse form of Poe's famous "The Raven." According to his own testimony, Guttormsson had been attracted to Poe by the latter's "creative gifts, power of fantasy, and spiritual force," to quote from Dr. Kirkconnell's article. On the other hand, as Guttormsson's poems and plays, "Sandy Bar" included, amply reveal, he was far too independent in thought to become the imitator even of those writers who appealed most strongly to him.

Besides the subject matter for his notable poems on Icelandic-Canadian pioneer life, he found themes in his

early environment and personal experiences for other important poems. With striking vividness and deep sympathy, he describes in his poem "Indíana-hátíðin" (Indian Festival) the life of the North American Indian as he had seen it near Icelandic River in his youth. This poem is, therefore, thoroughly authentic, and at the same time unique in Icelandic literature. (For an English translation, see Dr. Kirkconnell's collection *Canadian Overtones*, Winnipeg, 1935, and his article on Guttormsson, containing the translation).

Deeply attached to his native New Iceland, Guttormsson has eulogized it and the ultimate victories of the Icelandic pioneers in numerous warm-hearted and stirring poems, fraught with genuine filial devotion.

His many symbolic poems are a specially significant and original aspect of his poetry. Among the earlier ones is his excellent poem "Sál hússins" (The Soul of the House), in which he very effectively uses the old symbol of the fire on the hearth for the soul of the house. (An English translation by the late Professor Skúli Johnson is included in my book, *Icelandic Lyrics*, Revkjavík, 1930 and 1936).

Increasingly, the symbolic element became prominent in Guttormsson's poetry, on themes which often at the same time were drawn from his experience. In "Býflugnaræktin" (The Care of the Bees), as Professor Kirkconnell effectively expresses it, the poet uses a familiar episode of bee-keeping to adumbrate the spiritual tragedy of his own life" (*Canadian Overtones*). Dr. Kirkconnell's translation of the poem (included both in *Canadian Overtones* and his study of the poet) follows:

Honey-bees of my high ideals
Have I imprisoned in this my winter,
Night and day in the chilling darkness
Down in the cellar beneath my spirit.

Honey had grown too hard to gather.
Ghastly and pallid, the flowers had
withered;
Burdensome snowdrifts had bent them
under;
Blizzards lay deep on my fields and
orchard.

Honey bees of my high ideals
Had to wait for my life's warm summer,
Freely they'd rouse at the first spring
sunshine,
Fly from the cellar beneath my spirit.

Then they would cling to the fragrant
clover,
Clammy cells of exceeding sweetness,
Harvesting honey of praise and honor,
Happy in breezes of golden springtime.

Spring came at last, but the lingering
winter
Levelled its snows on the frozen
farmlands.
Ere the fields could be ploughed and
planted,

Pinching hunger assailed their vitals.

Time went by and I raised the
trap-door,
Took the ladder and sought the cellar.
Stygian voices I heard distinctly
Stir in the subterranean darkness.

Savage hunger and sullen rancour
Sang in the clouds of that dim inferno;

Borne from the depths like a blast of
brimstone,
Buzzed the rage of their venomous
cursing.

Bees that were pang'd to the point of
murder.
Pricked at my flesh in the soul's deep
shadows;
Stabbed me in rage and installed their
poison;
Stung, I screamed like a wolf half-
scalded.

Scars are my due till my day is over
Deep-sunk eyes and a throat all
swollen.
Loathsome I feel my mutilation,
Less like a man than fallen angel.

Through Guttormsson's penetrating portrayal, his personal tragedy takes on universal application, and this strikingly original and effective poem excellently illustrates the fundamental symbolic quality of his poetry. Other notable poems of his in that vein are "Birnin" (Bears) and "Jarðgöngin" — (The Tunnel), to name but two examples. The latter was characterized by Dr. Kirkconnell as "perhaps the finest prosodic achievement of the year," in his survey of Canadian literature in languages other than English published in Canada in 1957. He also included a translation of the poem in the survey that appeared in *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, Fall Number 1958. (The translation was reprinted in *The Icelandic Canadian*, Winnipeg, Winter Number, 1958).

Guttormsson's poetry is uncommonly rich in original and colorful nature descriptions, where striking similes are a characteristic element. One of the

most poetic stanzas, in which the personification of an Indian girl as "Indian Summer" is brilliantly and consistently carried out.

Other nature poems of his are characterized by lyric quality and light touch, and none in a higher degree than his beautiful lyric "Góða nótt" (Good Night), which follows in Mrs. Jakobina Johnson's translation (included in Beck's *Icelandic Lyrics* and in Mrs. Johnson's *Northern Lights*).

Stillness reigns. — The winds are
sleeping.
All our world is bent on keeping
Tryst with night, whose wings are
sweeping
From the west each ray of light.
Dusk, — a soft and silken cover
Over all is seen to hover
In its readiness to cover
All the drowsy world. — Good night.
Earth, a restful bed inviting
All her tired to sleep. — Good night.

Those who labored long, untiring,
Hail this time of rest, — desiring
Strength renewed through sweet
retiring,
—Welcome thoughts of short respite.
And through spaces real or seeming
Find the Eden of their dreaming
Soar to starry ways, redeeming
Hours of toil and pain. — Good night.
With the golden suns of heaven
As companion stars. — Good night.

God of Sleep, descend embracing
All the weary souls, effacing
Pain and grief,—Thy pinions tracing
Airy ways in dreamy flight.
God of Dreams, prolong endearing

Scenes for all whose luckless steering
Wrecks their ships;—who go careering
Past all loveliness.—Good night.
Those, who, drifting, miss the beauty
Of their waking hours. — Good night.

Peace of heav'n on all descending,
With this stillness softly blending
Here abide. — Our thoughts ascending
In a fervent prayer unite:
From the pain of wounds relieve us,
From the dread of cold reprieve us.
• Mav the joyous sun receive us
When the morning breaks.

Good night.

All in peace await the radiant
Angel of the dawn. —Good night.

This exquisite poem also clearly reveals the fundamental note in Guttormsson's philosophy of life and a surging undercurrent in his poetry, a profound sympathy with the stepchildren of life, the underdog, all who are oppressed. His humor, a basic element in his poetry, finds vigorous expression in social satires bitterly assailing the injustice, greed, and inequalities of the social order. In one of the most extensive and memorable of such satires, "Bölvun lögmálsins" (The Curse of the Law), he flays mercilessly the grain speculators who grow fat on the toil of the farmers. (Printed in English translation in Dr. Kirkconnell's study on the poet.) In many of his satires Guttormsson uses symbolism with telling effect.

With his dexterous use of the epigram as a vehicle for his satirical barbs, as well as for more good-natured

humor, he carries on brilliantly a time-honored Icelandic literary tradition. His metrical skill is further evinced by the facility with which he successfully handles a great variety of verse forms. His diction is equally rich and varied, revealing his amazing mastery of the Icelandic language. In his hands it is a many-stringed and responsive instrument. As indicated by his wide reading, he was not only steeped in Icelandic literature, but had drawn rich spiritual nourishment from many other literatures as well.

While his major literary contribution was poetry, his one-act dramas are also a noteworthy addition to Icelandic literature. Strikingly symbolic, they are profound in thought and often remarkably distinctive in theme and dramatic method. (For a further discussion of them, see Dr. Kirkconnell's study and Dr. Stefán Einarsson's *History of Icelandic Prose Writers—1800-1940 (Íslandia Vol. XXXII-III)*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1948.)

Guttormsson was widely admired and esteemed in Iceland, which he visited twice, in 1938, at the special invitation of the Icelandic Government and again in 1963, under the sponsorship of the honored guest of the nation, ship of The Icelandic National League of America and other well-wishers. These visits to the land of his forebears, where he was given a magnificent reception on both occasions, were for him a source of great joy and inspiration, as vividly revealed in his poems.

His fruitful appreciation of the Icelandic cultural heritage and affection for Iceland were matched by his equally fervent and genuine devotion to Canada, the land of his birth and his lifelong home. He eulogized both with equal warmth in his poems. There is exultant filial pride in his elevated and eloquent tribute, simply entitled "Canada". It has been translated by Mrs. Jakobína Johnson and is included both in her *Northern Lights* and in my own *Icelandic Lyrics*. The concluding stanza was particularly timely in Canada's historic Centennial Year, not least the challenging closing lines, aptly striking a note of national unity:

Devoted and true to their country new
Are Canada's sons today.
And death alone shall have claimed
Their own,
Ere they shall turn away.
With our strength untold which is tried
And old,
Our country shall reach her goal,
Through the clearing haze of tongue
And race,
United in heart and soul.

Dr. Kirkconnell concludes the introduction to his book *Canadian Overtones* with these words:

"It is the glory of the Icelandic settlers that in their first generation among us they have created a poetry, based on Canada and their experience of it, that is worthy of challenging comparison with the best that three centuries have produced in their foster-country."

Guttormur J. Guttormsson, the poet-farmer of Riverton, Manitoba, has a large share in that remarkable achievement. While his poetry is, naturally, uneven in excellence, many of his poems are destined to live in Icelandic literature because of their intellectual vigor, originality, insight, and mastery of form. Added to that is the fact that he has enriched Icelandic literature with new themes and thus extended its realm in memorable fashion.

—American-Scandinavian Review
March, 1968



AT THE GALLERY

AN ICELANDIC HERITAGE

by Rosa Ho

Walters was on view in Gallery of the Art Gallery. The exhibition was the gallery to coincide with the centennial of the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg, October 11, 1875.

Mr. Walters was born in Winnipeg in 1893. His parents were of Icelandic descent. He spent most of his youth in North Dakota and in Western Canada, working at odd jobs for a living. His career as a painter only started to gain momentum when he went off to study, before the age of 30, at the Chicago Art Institute. He later went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and studied under the tutelage of the artist J. M. W. Turner at the Louis C. Tiffany Foundation in Oyster Bay, Long Island. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Walters began teaching every summer at the Pennsylvania State College, a position he held for 13 years. It was during this time he formed his "first period, a time of great lyricism and impressionism." His early style was influenced by the

early period share much of the interest and characteristics of the Impressionists. He was interested in depicting the naturalness of a scene in terms of climatic and atmospheric conditions.

His formative period came to an end when the artist decided to set out for Iceland to work in its sub-arctic environment. He was so intrigued by the grandeur of the rocks and mountains, he stayed for seven months. However, beyond the visual exhilaration he experienced from this new environment he was bombarded with new problems in vision, color and perspective. The atmosphere in Iceland is very clear; color and visual imageries stand out sharply. The style he mastered so well in his formative period would not suffice. It was at this time he changed his painting style from a lyrical and impressionistic one, to one which was strong in pattern and design. These works from Iceland were exhibited in many American cities and were well received — many of the paintings were acquired by museums and galleries all

over the world. A number of honors were awarded to the artist following these exhibitions of the Icelandic paintings. In 1937, the Explorers Club of New York made him an active member in recognition of the exploratory value of his Icelandic paintings and, in 1939, King Christian of Iceland and Denmark decorated him with the Icelandic Order of the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon.

Mr. Walters made another contribution to Icelandic culture by undertaking a project of creating visual records of the historic Vinland sagasteads. These pieces are connected with the discovery of America by Leif Ericson and his fellow explorers in the year 1000. There are two chapters to the Vinland sagasteads, the Iceland chapter completed in 1955, and the Greenland chapter done in 1956. These paintings, done in the interests of history, strengthen the ethnic and cultural identity of the Icelanders and others who are of Icelandic descent. Most of the Vinland sagasteads paintings have been acquired by the National Collection of Fine Arts of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The gallery has some of these works on loan

for the exhibition. Mr. Walters' works from this period present yet another painting style. These paintings are characterized by heavy and clearly defined outlines, yet the modelling and treatment of details is less rigidly rendered. The effect is one of naturalism which is the artist's ultimate aspiration. In his own words he has said, "I endeavor to paint nature as I see her in her varied forms, in the last analysis Mother Nature is the teacher par excellence."

Mr. Walters' interest in nature was not, however, confined to northern subjects. His friend Lowell Thomas commented on the extent of Mr. Walters' work "Emile Walters, my fellow member of the New York Explorers Club . . . when seeking subjects has travelled from Death Valley to Iceland, from the Canadian Rockies to New Mexico, pausing en route to paint The Theodore Roosevelt country of the North Dakota Badlands . . . he is equally at home with the stark, powerful beauty of the sub-Arctic and the tender mood of a spring or fall day in Dutchess County, New York."

Emile Walters, The Explorer





COURTESY OF "THE ALBERTAN"

Sigrún Jóhannesson pats the velvety nose of NWMP officer Vince Crowley's horse as she tours Heritage Park during a visit of Icelanders to Calgary. Gísli Guðmundsson looks on.

SIGRÚN JOHANNESSEN

by Linda Curtis

Sigrún Jóhannesson's round, happy Icelandic face wore a perpetual smile as she pattered around Calgary's Heritage Park in her home-made black leather slippers. She fitted right in with the historical theme of the park, yet it was entirely coincidental. Her long grey hair was arranged in two braids that looped in the back like lariats and hung almost to her waist. She probably hadn't cut it since she was born — 83 years ago.

She was wearing her native "upplutur", which includes a long black skirt and vest, black cap and a blouse and apron of floral sheer. The vest was decorated with silver embroidery and silver rings gathered up the long black tassel on her cap. She couldn't speak English, but her friends told me she has fifteen children, fifty grandchildren and twenty-nine great-grandchildren.

She loves to travel and was in Israel when the historic six-day war broke out. She was confined to her hotel room for a whole week due to the military emergency, but the experience didn't dampen her enthusiasm for travelling. When she learned that a group of Icelanders was coming to Canada to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Icelandic settlement

around Gimli, Manitoba, she quickly joined the tour.

Half the group of 300 making the excursion spent the weekend in Calgary, journeying to Markerville where they saw the home of the great Icelandic-Canadian poet Stephan G. Stephansson, who died in 1927. The house has been declared a historic site and is to be restored with the help of \$10,000 donated by Icelandic farmers who visited Alberta on August 10.

"There were so many on this part of the tour, we had to break up into two groups," explained the leader, Gísli Guðmundsson. "Some of the hotels couldn't accommodate us all at the same time".

Gísli, a tall, well built man with a commanding personality, herded his charges around with the authority of a school teacher. That's logical, because he is a teacher in a commercial college in Reykjavik.

"Teachers get a three-month holiday in Iceland, so I can moonlight," he grinned. "Of course, we make up for this extra time by having a six-day school week. Remember, we have only about four hours of daylight in the middle of the winter and about twenty-hours of daylight during the summer. School children from about 12 to 17

years of age attend gardening schools in the summer. These were started by the city and this year between 1,200 and 1,300 students are learning all about gardening. They get paid. We wouldn't get them otherwise."

Gísli speaks good English, having lived in the Winnipeg area from 1928 to 1938. He went back to Iceland to visit his mother and while he was there the Second World War broke out, so he never did return to Canada.

He said that although Danish had been his country's second language, today English is taking over that role. About two-thirds of the people on the tour could speak English.

The visitors were not accustomed to such warm weather as we had during their stay. "In Iceland," Gísli said, "we have no extremes of weather. In Reykjavik if it goes down to zero in the winter it's considered cold, and in summer it goes to perhaps 55 or 65."

That could account for the beautiful complexions of most Icelanders.

Half the homes in the capital are centrally heated by hot water from the abundant nearby hot springs, so air pollution is minimal.

"By 1985 we'll not be needing any oil for heating," prophesied Gísli. "We have some industry, such as ship building, clothing and shoe manufacturing, but we import our grain."

The tourist business is also increasing as more and more people from both Europe and North America are visiting Iceland. Last year 70,000 travellers included it on their holiday itineraries.

"We had a lot of Canadian and United States Icelanders visit us last year when we celebrated our 1,100th anniversary. So this year the Icelandic National League decided to sponsor a tour to Canada. It was so popular that instead of the anticipated two plane loads, it grew to eight".

"So far everyone has been enjoying the trip very much. They thought Vancouver was magnificent, although two ladies complained to me that there was a mouse in their room. I told them to go and find a cat," he chuckled. "They're all delighted with Calgary. Everybody's so ready to help. Albertans can be proud of their smiles, and tell them to keep them up."

—The Albertan



DAVID BERGMAN —

Icelandic Canadian Recipients of the Rhodes Scholarships

A remarkable honour bestowed annually upon Canada's finest, most proficient and accomplished male university students is a Rhodes Scholarship. This year two of the eleven Canadian recipients are known to have one parent of Icelandic descent and the occasion is appropriate to describe what a Rhodes Scholarship is, the generous commitment it entails for the individual, and identify five Canadians of Icelandic origin who have received Rhodes Scholarships.

Rhodes Scholarships were founded with the Will of Cecil J. Rhodes, an Englishman who died in 1902. When only a boy Cecil Rhodes went to South Africa and soon began to dig for diamonds. He had reasonable success, but returned to England when twenty years old to enter the University of Oxford. However, Rhodes' health was delicate and after eight years of study he returned to the dryer climate of South Africa and successfully resumed his business affairs. Cecil Rhodes gathered a fortune as a developer of gold and diamond mines. He became a financier and statesman and pioneered in the development of the rich resources of South Africa. Rhodes claimed the district of Rhodesia as suitable for British colonization. It was in Rhodesia that he was buried in 1902.

Cecil Rhodes believed that the world and the British Empire would benefit if English-speaking people knew more about one another. With the establishment of Rhodes Scholarships students from all parts of the Commonwealth, the United States, and Germany were to be given generous scholarships to study for two years or a maximum of three years at the University of Oxford or an associated College. In 1916 the British Parliament revoked the five scholarships given to Germany.

The basis of selection was laid down by Mr. Rhodes in that section of his Will in which he defined the general type of scholar he desired;

"Literary and scholastic attainments; qualities of manhood, truthfulness, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship; exhibition of moral force of character and of instincts to lead and to take an interest in his fellows; physical vigour, as shown by fondness for or success in manly outdoor activities."

The Rhodes Scholarship Memorandum for Canada states, "Quality of both character and intellect is the most important requirement for a Rhodes Scholarship."

SKULI JOHNSON

In the years 1909 and 1910 the Rhodes Scholarships for Manitoba went to two students of Icelandic descent who in later years distinguished themselves in somewhat different areas as scholars and citizens. Skuli Johnson, of Wesley College, won his Rhodes Scholarship in 1909, a year before he was to graduate. The following year his friend and Manitoba College student, Joseph T. Thorson, was selected.

Skuli Johnson was born in Iceland and came to Canada with his parents at the age of one year, in 1889. His parents were homesteaders who settled in the Logberg district of what is now the Province of Saskatchewan. Logberg was mainly a community of Icelanders and, as one may imagine, only Icelandic was spoken. Skuli was likely self-taught in the English language by reading English newspapers as often as he could obtain them.

The typically harsh homesteading existence claimed his father's life in 1895, and in 1899, at the age of eleven, Skuli Johnson was taken to Winnipeg, where he was placed in the grade five class at the Isbister School. Later he completed his high school matriculation requirements at the old Central Collegiate, located at Kate Street and William Avenue. There he won the Isbister Prize, and scholarships in Mathematics, Latin, English and Greek. Skuli had established his interests in both the languages and mathematics when he entered Wesley College in the fall of 1906, but he had not yet decided in which of these disciplines he would concentrate.

During Skuli Johnson's three terms at Wesley College* (1906-1907, 1907-1908, 1908-1909) he excelled academically and participated in many student activities. In his First and Second Year Arts he won scholarships or Honourable Mention in Mathematics, Latin, English, Greek, French and Roman History, and in Third Year Arts he tied, with Joe Thorson, for the scholarship in Classics. He enjoyed debating and was a member of one Champion Intercollegiate Debating Team, he was interested in a variety of athletics both as a participant and an organizer, and he was continually involved in literary activities.

Skuli attended the University of Oxford for two terms as a student at Oriel College, where he studied Classics. This included Greek and Roman History, Philosophy, and Languages. Oriel was one of the many smaller colleges that together constituted the University of Oxford and Skuli attended lectures at other colleges besides Oriel. Not surprisingly, Skuli Johnson did very well as a student but he also used some of his time to belong to the Camelon Literary Society, the Oxford Colonial Club, the Oriel Philosophical Club, and even to be the Treasurer of the Oxford Lacrosse Club.

The University of Oxford was essentially a system of closely affiliated colleges and the individual student was allowed much independence and freedom in the conduct of his studies. Skuli was deeply impressed with this method of teaching and the opportunity it gave to each student to demonstrate both to himself and to his in-

structors, what he was really able to accomplish. The position, the development, and the confidence of the individual were valued and enhanced by the system. This obviously affected Skuli's attitude toward his own students and his style of teaching later.

When Skuli Johnson returned to Winnipeg he re-entered Wesley College to complete his final year in Arts and graduated in 1913 with a B.A. (Hon.) degree. He then entered the Provincial Normal School to obtain his teaching certification. During that year he was Editor and Organizer of their Student Magazine and Valedictorian for the Senior Class. His first teaching position was as Classical Master in St. John's Technical High School for the 1914-1915 term. The following year he returned to Wesley College, this time as a Lecturer in Classics. In 1917 he obtained his M.A. degree with the thesis topic: *A Century of Sonnet Writing in Icelandic*. Both his B.A. (Hons.) and his M.A. degree were graded *magna cum laude*. In 1917 Skuli was also promoted to Professor of Classics.

As a teacher Skuli Johnson built a strong reputation with his students and among his colleagues. During his years at Wesley College he maintained his teaching duties in Classics and beyond this he also lectured in Old Icelandic whenever students enrolled for the course. He was always interested in students and their activities, so he found time to assume positions such as Chairman of Athletics, and he was the Honorary President of various student groups. In 1920 he was appointed Dean of Arts; he also assumed many committee responsibilities at the College. He always took a personal interest in his students.

In 1921 Skuli Johnson married Evelyn Truesdale. Mrs. Johnson and

their two sons, Harold and Richard, now live in Winnipeg.

Skuli Johnson left Wesley College in 1927 to join the Department of Classics at the University of Manitoba and in 1940 he became Head of that Department. During his tenure at the University Skuli participated actively in University affairs as exemplified by his membership on the Senate and on such committees as the Executive Committee of Graduate Studies and Research. He was among many of the Icelanders of the Winnipeg area who were successful in establishing a Department of Icelandic Studies at the University of Manitoba.

There are a great many other noteworthy honours and achievements that could be documented but space only allows a brief encapsulation of these. Skuli Johnson spent many hours translating ancient and modern Icelandic poetry, and Latin and Greek poetry into English verse. Interestingly, his translation of the New Iceland Constitution into English is in the possession of the Manitoba Historical Society. Indeed, he had a keen taste for most languages and literature. In 1939 he was honoured by the Government of Iceland and made Knight of the Royal Order of the Falcon. In 1954 he was made a Fellow in the Royal Society of Canada.

He was an active member of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Winnipeg and was awarded Honorary Life Membership. He contributed many valuable articles of a literary nature to the *Icelandic Canadian* and he edited *Iceland's Thousand Years*, published by the Icelandic Canadian Club and the National League, in 1945.

In the Centennial Issue (1967) of the *Icelandic Canadian*, Roy St. George Stubbs described his former Latin Professor, Skuli Johnson: "He was a

* Wesley and Manitoba Colleges were joined in the founding of United College, in 1938. In 1967 United College was granted full university status as the University of Winnipeg.

true scholar. Love of knowledge was his ruling passion. He had ambition but it was an ambition which he pointed in the right direction. He had no thought of piling up pelf for himself. His ambition was to pay his passage through life by giving honourable service — the service of a dedicated teacher — to his fellowmen."

JOSEPH T. THORSON

The parents of Joseph T. Thorson, Stephen Thorson and his wife Sigrídur Thorarinsdóttir, both came from Iceland. Joseph was born in Winnipeg, in 1889. He and Skuli Johnson were students together in high school. As students they had the highest record of marks to that time and they shared a common interest in Classics. During the 1908-1909 term Skuli Johnson attended Wesley College while Joe attended Manitoba College. Joe was awarded his Rhodes Scholarship in his graduating year, 1910, in which year he received a B.A. degree with Honours in Classics.

At University of Oxford (1910-1913) Joe Thorson attained the degree of B.A. in Jurisprudence at the end of his second year, then, in his final year he completed his Bar Exams and on June 4, 1913, in London, he was called to the Bar by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, London. On November 26 he was called to the Bar of Manitoba.

Joseph Thorson returned from England with a strong determination that Canada should run her own affairs. This prompted him, when he became a Member of Parliament, to advocate the abolition of appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and that Canada should decide for herself the issue of peace or war. Both objectives were ultimately achieved.

In 1916 Mr. Thorson married Aileen B. Scarth. They had three children, Margaret Ellen, Donald Scarth, and Shelagh Gail.

He practiced law for a few years after returning from Oxford, then served overseas in the first World War from 1916 until 1919. He returned to practice law in Winnipeg, with Phillips and Scarth until May, 1921, when he was appointed Dean of the Manitoba Law School.

In 1926 Joe Thorson was elected Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South Centre, as Liberal, but was defeated in the 1930 General Election. Then, again in 1935, he was elected Member of Parliament for Selkirk Constituency. He was re-elected in 1940.

In 1939 he was appointed Grand Knight with Star of the Royal Order of the Falcon by the Government of Iceland.

In 1941 Mr. Thorson was elected Chairman of the War Expenditures Committee of the House of Commons. On June 11, 1941 he was appointed Minister of National War Services in the cabinet of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. He was the first Canadian of Icelandic descent to become a Canadian Cabinet Minister. On October 6, 1942 the Honourable Joseph T. Thorson was appointed President (Chief Justice) of The Exchequer Court of Canada, again, the first Canadian of Icelandic descent to become a Chief Justice.

During his tenure of office as head of The Exchequer Court, Chief Justice Thorson took part in several extra-judicial activities. Of these the most important one was as President of the International Commission of Jurists, a world-wide organization concerned with the advancement of the Rule of Law throughout the world. He held this office from 1952 to 1959, when

he resigned. In 1964 Judge Thorson retired from The Exchequer Court, following which he served for two years as President of the Canadian Citizenship Council in an effort to advance Human Rights.

Since his retirement Joseph Thorson has found some time to resume his private law practice in Ottawa. However, he has retained an abiding sense for service and duty. Since 1969 he has been President of The Single Canada League, an organization opposed to the imposition of bilingualism on the people of Canada, beyond the requirements of the British North America Act.

The preceding is only a summarizing account of Joe Thorson's many many activities and accomplishments. Others could be listed *ad infinitum*. For example, he has been awarded honorary degrees from several universities; University of Iceland (Juris Doctor—1930), University of Manitoba (LL.D.—1958), University of Waterloo (LL.D.—1964), and The University of Winnipeg (LL.D.—1970). This Canadian has served his country well.

DAVID JACOBSON

David Jacobson is one of two Rhodes Scholars chosen annually for the Province of Ontario. David, a 1975 recipient, is a 21 year old graduate in Honours Mathematics and Physics from Royal Military College, Kingston, and obtained the highest standing in his class. He graduated as a Marine Engineer, with the rank of Lieutenant. He is soon to become a Wing Commander in the Canadian Armed Forces.

David's father, Stanley Jacobson, is of Icelandic descent, while David's mother, Francis Jacobson is of Dutch extraction. Stanley Jacobson enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force dur-

ing World War II and later joined the R.C.M.P. Stanley Jacobson's father, Unnsteinn Jacobson, served Canada in the First World War.

David Jacobson exemplifies the many qualities and criteria a Rhodes Scholar must satisfy in the minds of a selection committee. The academic achievements of this young man are outstanding. He is completely bilingual (English and French), he is reported to have demonstrated marked qualities of leadership during his four years at Kingston, and is an accomplished athlete.

WARREN ELMER NORRIS

MAGNUSSON

Warren Elmer Norris Magnusson was Manitoba Rhodes Scholar, in 1967. He graduated that year from the University of Manitoba with B.A. degree, First Class Honors, his special subjects being Economics and Political Science. He was active in party politics on the Campus and in his graduation year he was Prime Minister of the Student Model Parliament. He was editor of the University College Journal and contributed to the university student paper *The Manitoban*. He trained with the R.C.A.F. University Reserve and received his commission in the R.C.A.F. Supplementary Reserve.

Warren Magnusson is the son of Major-General and Mrs. Norman L. Magnusson, formerly of Winnipeg, and his paternal grandparents were the late Mr. and Mrs. Ari Magnusson, of Winnipeg.

He attended Oxford University.

JAMES CHARLES MATTHEWS

Mr. James C. Matthews is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Matthews of St. Vital, in Winnipeg. Mrs. Matthews,

the former Fjola Benson, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Benson, who now lives in Winnipegosis.

To simply catalogue Jim Matthews' overwhelming list of accomplishments would extend this writing beyond allowable limits and perhaps even make this unpretentious young man feel uncomfortable. It is grossly understating to claim that he and his admiring family have every reason to be proud of both his academic and athletic accomplishments which seem inseparably intertwined.

Jim Matthews was an exceptional student in elementary school with averages in the nineties. The following three years of junior high at Norberry School he continued to achieve scholastically. In grade eight he won a Bronze Medal for Language, and a General Proficiency Award for school work, but at this time his interest in, and aptitude toward, athletics was also evident with his winning of a Gold Centennial Athletic Award during Canada's Centennial Year. Up to this time Jim had played in Little League baseball, attained a Blue Belt rating in Judo, and belonged to a local Wolf Cub organization—all with distinction.

Jim attended high school at Dakota Collegiate during the years of 1968-71. In each of his three terms his final marks rose and he graduated from grade twelve with a ninety-one percent average with honours in all subjects. He was presented with the Silver Citizenship Award by Dakota Collegiate for his representation of his school in the high school quiz tele-

vision program "Reach for the Top". In addition he won the Gold Medal for Physics; the Gold Medal for General Proficiency; and I.O.D.E. award, The Johanna Gudrun Skaptason Memorial Scholarship, of the Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E.

Another significant honour directed to Jim on his graduation from Dakota Collegiate was the Carl Ridd Award, presented each year to the Manitoba high school student who demonstrates combined excellence in academic achievement and in basketball. Jim had played basketball and volleyball for his school teams and they won several provincial championships.

In 1970 Jim was selected as a member of the Manitoba Volleyball Team which won the Canadian Junior Championship that year in Calgary. In 1971 he again represented the Province as a member of a championship volleyball team, this time at the 1971 Winter Games at Saskatoon, when they won a Gold Medal for Manitoba. During these years Jim also represented Manitoba nationally on Judo, bowling and tennis teams.

In the fall of 1971 Jim Matthews enrolled in Science at the University of Manitoba. He continued his participation in volleyball and basketball but he had, over the years, also enjoyed, and become quite proficient at, playing tennis during the summers. In 1969 he won the 16 years singles, 16 years doubles, and 18 years singles in Manitoba. He travelled to Ottawa for the National Championships. In 1970, at the age of 16 years Jim won

the Manitoba 18-year singles and doubles, and then represented the Province in the National Championships, held in Vancouver, in the 16-years and under, and the 18-years and under competitions. In 1971 he was rated in Manitoba tennis as the number one Junior and the number two Men's player. He won the Manitoba 18-years singles and doubles again, the Western Canada 18-years doubles, and was runner-up in several other important competitions.

In the spring of 1972 Jim Matthews accompanied several members of his former Dakota Collegiate volleyball team and some other players from the Winnipeg area to the Canadian Junior Men's Volleyball Championships, and they won. For their efforts each member was presented with an 'Order of the Buffalo Hunt' award by Hon. Edward Schreyer, Premier of Manitoba.

In the fall of 1972 Jim accepted a tennis scholarship at the University of Kentucky. The following year, 1973, he entered The University of Winnipeg as a major in Mathematics. He graduated as an "A" student and was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship for

Manitoba for 1975. In October, 1973, at The University of Winnipeg, he received the Board of Regents Athletic Award, and also the McBean Foundation Entrance Scholarship. In October, 1974 Jim was awarded the Barkwell Paper Company Limited award, and the James T. Watson General Proficiency Scholarship. Upon graduation in May, 1975, he received The University of Winnipeg Gold Medal in Physics, and the coveted O. T. Anderson Award as the outstanding graduate for distinguished academic and extracurricular achievement during undergraduate years.

During his two years at The University of Winnipeg, Jim Matthews distinguished himself as a member of the Wesmen Volleyball team. In the 1973-74 term this team became Canadian University Champions. During the summer of 1974 Jim's participation in tennis resulted in his winning the men's singles and doubles in both the Manitoba Open and the Winnipeg and District Championships. In 1975 he repeated with victories in the men's singles of these competitions.

His selection as Manitoba's Rhodes Scholar for 1975 was well deserved.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

In view of the Postal Strike, the dates for scholarship applications has been moved on.

THE ICELANDIC FESTIVAL OF MANITOBA to January 5, 1976.

THE CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION to January 5, 1976

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB, to January 20, 1976



Gíslastaðir

Jón Guðmundsson and Steinunn Magnúsdóttir on front steps



The blacksmith at Hólaland

The grindstone can be seen in front left hand corner of the shop



Bjarmaland, the home of Laugi and Valla Johnson. This lovely old home, facing the Hnausa Park, is a familiar landmark at Hnausa today.



Hólaland — This home was first built at Ekra, in the early 1900's, and then it was moved to Hólaland.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL, NOT ME, SAYS BOB GOODMAN



Robert Goodman

Robert Goodman is an Icelandic Canadian, born in Winnipeg the son of Barney Goodman and the late Elisabet Hrefna Goodman. But vital statistics out of the way, he'd rather talk about the Manitoba Centennial Center, a far more interesting subject of conversation than himself, who is merely doing a job as executive director of this marvelous complex, which he declares should be the pride of every Manitoban.

It takes no time at all to catch his enthusiasm, for Bob Goodman is clearly one of those fortunate individuals who enjoys his work. "It's an interesting place", he says, "beautiful premises

and the acoustics in the Concert Hall are internationally acclaimed. The atmosphere is still fresh with something new cropping up all the time." Three hundred groups performed in the Concert Hall during the past year and the total attendance was over 12,000. It employs a permanent staff of 85, with 50 part-time workers added for performances.

Robert, who with his wife Beryl performs in the Scandinavian Pavilion each year during Folklorama Week, happily recalled that last summer the dance group from Iceland was invited to perform in the Concert Hall at the end of the week. "Not because they were visitors from another country but because of the excellence of their performance." He found it exciting to help them and two of the group stayed in the Goodman home.

It was exciting, too, to take a walk around the place with Bob Goodman, who explains that while they are part of the Manitoba Centennial Centre, the Museum of Man and Nature and the Planetarium manage their own programs, but the buildings and services come under the same administration as the Concert Hall.

The Museum of Man and Nature is well named. It is a living history of

Manitoba from its primeval past, when magnificent animals fought for sovereignty over its forests and grasslands, through the succeeding ages of human struggle for survival, to the coming of the white man and his ultimate domination.

The buffalo and the caribou are there, lifelike and real, in their natural surroundings, the blue prairie sky above them and a horizon as wide as the world. Perceptive artists have brought into being this illusion of great distance, and the Museum itself is in constant process of creation. The renowned wildlife artist, Clarence Tilenius, is now busy in the Museum painting scenes of the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

The Indian hunter is seen here, fighting with primitive tools for existence in the wild kingdom of the plains before the coming of the white man. Authentic replicas of the vehicles, ships, a log cabin and countless genuine artifacts trace the story of civilized living, from the age of the fur traders who opened up the country to the influx of pioneers to clear the forest and till the soil, and to build villages that were to grow into great modern cities.

One could spend a week in the Museum of Man and Nature and still be drawn back for many more tours of exploration. 288,000 people went

through it last year, including well over 50,000 school children. Some were brought in busses from various points in the province. Its extension program catered to 230,000 people, while its multicultural classes in handicrafts and other ethnic arts were attended by 370,000.

The Planetarium attracted 131,000 people last year. It is one of the finest star theatres in North America, and each of its six major yearly productions is an introduction to the wonders of outer space.

The Centennial Centre is a cultural capital centered in the capital city of the province, and surely a grand reminder of the succeeding centennial anniversaries of the country and the province. The Manitoba Theatre Centre and the Centennial Concert Hall commemorate Canada's Centennial year in 1967. While the Museum of Man and Nature and the Planetarium opened in Manitoba's Centennial year, 1970.

As a couple of visitors from Iceland said last summer: "We could spend all the time we have here just to enjoy all there is to see in the Centennial Centre in Winnipeg."

Caroline Gunnarson

—Logberg-Heimskringla



FIRST WHITE CHILD AND FIRST ICELANDIC CHILD BORN IN NEW ICELAND

On October 22, 1875, the night after the first group of 285 Icelanders arrived by flatboat on the shores of Lake Winnipeg at Willow Point, a baby was born in a skin tent, sheltered by a large white rock on the shore. The baby was Jón Ólafur Jóhannson, son of Jóhann Vilhjálmur Jónsson, and his wife Sigríður Ólafsdóttir, a couple who came to Kinmount, Ontario, in 1874. Jón is remembered as the first white child and the first Icelandic child born in New Iceland. He lived in Gimli all his life, passing away in 1943, at the age of 68. He was one of the children stricken with smallpox in the second year of the settlement, and bore the marks of the disease all his life.

Jón Ólafur Jóhannson was traditionally and familiarly known as "Jón á Bólstað".



Jón Ólafur Jóhannson

THE HOME OF STEPHAN G. STEPHANSSON AN HISTORIC SITE

The home of Stephán G. Stepháns-son, famous Icelandic poet who home-stayed in Markerville, Alberta, has been designated an historic site by the Government of Alberta. This is the result of the cooperative efforts of the Calgary, Markerville and Edmonton Icelandic groups. On August 10, 1975 the property, including the house and yard, was dedicated before 150 farmers from Iceland, the National Theatre group, the Glima wrestlers, as well as

many Albertans of Icelandic origin and interested community members. At the dedication ceremony, Gunnar Guðbjartsson, formaður, (president) of the Stéttasamband Bænda (Farmers' Association of Iceland), presented \$10,000.00 in Canadian funds, which is to be used for the restoration of the house. Gísli Guðmundsson, speaking on behalf of the Þjóðræknisfélag (the Icelandic National League) pledged \$1000.00 toward the restoration.

Graduates and Scholarships

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

GRADUATES—OCTOBER 1975

Master of Science

BERGSON, Glenn Carl, B.Sc. (A.E.)

Major—Agricultural Engineering

Auxillary—Biochemistry.

Bachelor of Arts

AUGUSTSSON, Bjorg Hemmert

GILLIS, Terrence Brian

HJORLEIFFSON, Clive Robert

MAGNUSSON, Helen Sylvia

OLAFSON, Penny Lynn

PALSSON, Gregory Larus Valdimar

PETURSSON, Jon Barry

SIGURDSON, Laurel Belinda

Bachelor of Science (Honours)

JONASSON, David Thor

(First Class Honours)

Bachelor of Science

CHRISTIANSON, Carlyle Bruce

HALLSON, Lordie Joy

Bachelor of Home Economics

HELGASON, Heather Lynne

Bachelor of Music (Performance)

ARNASON, Carolyn Leslie Rae

Bachelor of Physical Education

JAKOBSON, Gestur Owen

Bachelor of Education

ANDERSON, Lois Helen

ISFELD, Noreen Olga

JOHANNSON, Linda Gayle, B.A.
(Winnipeg)

SVEINSON, Marguerite Frances, B.A.

Bachelor of Pedagogy

JOHNSON, Laurence Steingrimur
Guðni.

★

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

1947-75 Award, Prize and Fellowship Winners

BRANDSON, Keneva Ann

University Gold Medal in Bachelor
of Arts Honours.

A Manitoba Graduate Fellowship
for 1975-76 of \$3800.

AUSTMAN, Gary Leonard,

University Gold Medal in Dentistry,
The Dr. John W. Clay Medal for the
highest overall average in the four
years of Dentistry,

The MacLachlan Gold Medal for

proficiency in Complete Denture Prosthesis in the four years of Dentistry,

The Dr. John Abra Scholarship in Orthodontics for the highest standing in Fourth Year Dentistry,

The Dr. Joseph Freeman Memorial Book Prize for highest standing in Oral Surgery in Fourth Year Dentistry.

THORSTEINSSON, Kristjan Jon
Manitoba Hydro Thesis Prize for best Graduation Thesis in Electrical Engineering.

HALLGRIMSON, Vera Ann
Nursing Education Alumni Association Award for high level of achievement in the final year of the Degree course in Nursing.

PETURSSON, David Philip
E. B. Kernaghan Bursary - \$1481.97.

★

UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG DEGREES AND AWARDS AUTUMN, 1975

Bachelor of Education

OLSON, Phyllis Irene,
Starbuck, Manitoba.

Bachelor of Science

OLSON, Carol Elaine, Winnipeg.

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

STEFANSON, Valdimar Warren,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Bachelor of Arts — General

ISFELD, Linda May,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

JOHNSON, James Edward,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

JOHNSON, Kenneth Wayne,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

PETERSON, Mary Teresa,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

★

ACADEMIC AWARDS — 1974-75

Board of Regents General Proficiency
Scholarship

CHRISTIANSON, Eldon Keith, B.Sc.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Mary C. Rowell Prize

DAVIS, Sigrid Carole,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

First Year Arts, Science and Education
Board of Regents General Proficiency
Scholarship

EGGERTSON, Karen Gail,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

JOHNSON, Janet Linda Susan,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Entrance Awards, Arts Science and
Education — Board of Regents
Entrance Scholarship

GUNNLAUGSON, Marilyn Louise,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

KRISTJANSON, Eleanor Ruth
Winnipeg, Manitoba

SCHUSTER, Solveig Paula,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Pre-Thirties Alumni Entrance
Scholarship

SIGURDSON, Wade Johannes,
Lundar, Manitoba

Class of '39 Alumni Entrance
Scholarship

THORLEIFSON, Leonard Harvey,
Baldur, Manitoba



GIMLI SAGA

The Gimli Women's Institute prepared in 1973 a three-volume 1400-page history of the Gimli Community, for entry in the triennial competition for the Lady Tweedsmuir trophy, awarded for the best community history compiled by a Women's Institute in Canada. This book, **Gimli Saga**, was awarded the silver trophy at the National Convention in June, 1973.

As their centennial project for the Centennial of New Iceland, Gimli included, the Gimli Women's Institute prepared and published a revised version of **Gimli Saga**. This 798-page includes the story of the first settlement of New Iceland, in 1875, the arrival of other ethnic pioneers, including the Ukrainian, Polish and many others of

various nationalities. The growth of the community, its schools, churches, industries, sports and organizations. Family histories are featured prominently. The book is copiously illustrated, with about 300 pictures.

"The Gimli Saga" says Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson in his foreword, "gives us a truly panoramic view of some of the ethnic components of our society and their gradual integration into the larger national context".

The cost of **Gimli Saga** is \$10.00 and orders may be sent to:

**Gimli Women's Institute
Box 1019,
Gimli, Manitoba,
R0C 1B0**



THE OLD SHOES

by Páll S. Pálsson

How often I've acted to vary my shoes
As I change them, an alternate pathway to choose,
From previous courses to swerve.
They often have trodden through wasteland and clay,
But their tracks were erased with the sands of the day,
And each annual season advanced their decay,
For their purpose was only to serve.

Through each stage of a lifetime the shoes take their stance
As a foot lifts them up to a higher expanse
And life's journey its value assesses.
First the tiny babe's togs shine like exquisite gold
As a boundless potential appears to unfold
And the gurglings whisper of journeys untold
From within the soft leather's caresses.

From mother's direction the first stumbles led
Out into the world, where each tentative tread
Took their wearer on courses unknown.
To the joyous, exuberant steps of a boy,
To poverty, riches, to sorrow, to joy,
To each far-off adventure that fate might employ
To fashion the seed it had sown.

The shoes of the shepherd boy add to the store,
So limber it seems they could easily soar
Far over the mountainous passes.
Though often ornate, they're a commonplace thing
With their broken thongs quickly replaced with a string,
Though their wearer may squirm with embarrassment's sting
Should he meet up with one of the lasses.

The cumbersome clods for the catechist's school
Though serviceable, were an ill-fitting tool
To drag me to altars of learning.
Many questions I asked, but few answers returned
As I went through the forms; mighty little I learned.
'Twas too early, I felt, wise man's place to be earned,
Though I still felt a vague, empty yearning.

To mark confirmation, in beauty I'm shod
With feathers and toe-guards bedecking each clod
As protection from lava and frost.
In man's walk of life over forest and shale
There are hazards against which the will must prevail,
But the self-willed and stubborn are certain to fail
As down into the abyss they're tossed.

Then the shoes of the scholar my closet adorn,
Though it's hard to perceive that they've ever been worn,
With their heel and toe likewise unmarred.

With their more active comrades, neglected they sit,
Unconcerned about whether or not they will fit —
Their thoughts for the present, they care not a bit
Though the past left their bottoms unscarred.

The slippers intended for ballroom and dance,
For gaiety, rapture, for song and romance,
Are shone to a brilliant sheen.
So supple and light, no encumbrance are they;
But they're too weak for work, only fashioned for play.
When the music has stopped, quite forgotten they stay,
And there's nothing to mark where they've been.

Of less beauty but far more endurance, the shoes
Of the workman sit waiting. They've nothing to lose.
For they know they'll be needed once more.
Though shoddy and worn, they're a thing to respect,
For in faithful endeavor and toil they were wrecked.
And calamity's shadow they've helped to deflect,
As they built up their wearer's small store.

The emigrant shoes must be washed, cleaned and dyed,
For they carried me far o'er the ocean's vast tide,
And their seams must be sturdy and tight.
Though with high hopes I came to a new virgin land,
Seeking fortune and wealth from its unending strand,
I've but little to hold in my toil-calloused hand
Now that morning has faded to night.

The wedding shoes here I like best of them all.
For they speak of emotions my heart to enthrall
And out on a bright road they took me.
O'er lava and gravel, o'er sheer stony hill,
The obstacles waned as they bore me at will
On a journey through bliss that's continuing still
For its excellence never forsook me.

The funeral shoes lie in sombre estate
And tell of the losses a merciless fate
Brings to all without any remission.
It seems they are scarred with the moisture of tears
As loved ones are lost with the passing of years
And it seems that the stab of bereavement still sears
And embeds itself in their condition.

The homecoming shoes beckon often to me
To don them and roam back to fond memory
That no trouble or sorrow can sever.
They'll carry me back to the scenes I love best,
Where with loving compassion I'll always be blessed.
So I'll tie up their thongs as the sun meets the west
And embark on my final endeavor.

Translated by Margret Geppert and Art Reykdal



The Battle of the Sexes



An Address delivered April 12, 1975 by Hrunn Skulason at the
Icelandic Canadian Banquet and Dance

International Women's Year being declared by the United Nations has prompted the Icelandic Canadian Club to have a woman speak at this Annual Dinner and Dance, an event, unheard of in the 25-year history of this organization. When I accepted the honour of speaking here tonight I did not know this. Knowing it now, I see that it is presumptuous of me to think that I can offer you anything to compare with the master-speakers of the past. But being only a woman I know that not too much will be expected.

I have decided to call this "The Battle of the Sexes". It will only be a ramble about a subject so vast, that hundreds of books and articles have been written about its various aspects and from diverse points of view. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread".

Ever since Eve tempted Adam, this battle has been raging. It is not a 30-year war nor even a 100-year war — but an everlasting war, to continue until the end of time. Man has ever been fleeing from the fetters that the love of a woman has imposed upon him, fleeing the responsibilities of home making, expecting the woman to stay at home to do the humdrum things,

while having the adventure of the world in his own superior way. Seeing the chaos our world is in, it is one sort of wonders. . .

I hope no one expects an amusing speech because the subject is about women. Reviewing the history of the past ages one cannot find much cause for laughter in women's struggle for recognition as human beings, nor is the recounting of atrocities committed against women make a pretty speech. Edmund Burke once wrote "A woman is but an animal, and not an animal of the highest order." Bernard Shaw improved a bit on that by saying "Women . . . the female of the human species and not a different kind of animal". Statements like these, women had to contend with and disprove over the ages. However, through the years women have upheld their status. Although they may have remained in men's shadow they have also been the motivation behind their endeavours. The Icelandic sagas give ample proof of this. We have such women as Bergþóra and Hallgerður in *Njáls saga*, Guðrún Ósvífsdóttir in *Laxdæla*, Auður in *Gísla saga* and many, many others

all playing a great part in the destiny of their men.

It is not my intention to give a historical account of women through the centuries but to mention only a few significant events concerning our Icelandic women in Iceland and Manitoba. This being our 100th anniversary in the province it is fitting to recall the battles that our women fought to gain recognition.

The bitterest battle to draw attention to the fact that women were no longer satisfied with their lot, was the suffrage movement. A battle fought in every country of the world, lasting many decades and still not won in some countries. The first countries to give women the vote were New Zealand, in 1893, Finland, 1906, Norway 1907, Denmark and Iceland 1915, Great Britain, 1918, and United States in 1920.

We can be proud of the fact that Icelandic women played such an active part in this struggle both in Iceland and Manitoba. It was however, a man who first publicly sparked the movement in Iceland — there was of course a woman in the background. The newspaper *Fjallkonan*, carried an article by its editor Valdimar Ásmundsson, in the January issue, 1885, called, "The Rights of Women". In June of the same year, the first article written by a woman appeared in "Fjallkonan" entitled "Education and rights of women", signed "By a young girl in Reykjavík". The first lecture was delivered in December, 1887, and later reprinted under the title "The first lecture by a woman in Iceland." Both the lecture and article were written by Briet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir, who could be called the Nellie McClung of Iceland. Briet later became the wife of Valdimar Ásmundsson, testifying to the fact that a man and a woman can work to-

gether both at home and in public life when prejudice is not involved.

In 1895 the "Women's Magazine", (*Kvennablaðið*) was established in Iceland, with Briet as its editor. She was also first president of the Society for the Emancipation of Women, which was founded in 1907 for the purpose of joining the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. I have only mentioned here the leader of the movement in Iceland. But, behind the leader stood the united workers, playing their part in the struggle. During these years the women were not only working for political privileges but also for equality of educational opportunities and working rights. So the battle went on and women were no longer considered on a level with the animals but men's equals in many respects. Some day full recognition will be won.

While our sisters in Iceland were fighting for their rights, our Icelandic women here in Manitoba were waging their own battles strongly supported by their men. From pioneer days the men felt that their women had fought with them in the battle for survival and were entitled to have a say in the running of the country that they had helped to build.

The part that our Icelandic women played in the suffrage movement is summarized in Catherine Lyle Cleverdon's book "The Suffrage Movement in Canada" and I quote: "Manitoba was the first province in Canada to grant full political privileges to women."

The movement in Manitoba began early. For the first faint stirrings it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the 1890's when a group of Icelandic women founded the pioneer suffrage organization in the province, and for that matter in the entire west. The actual date of the society's birth is not

known but it grew and prospered and was later followed by other Icelandic groups including both men and women. Although they sometimes collaborated with English-speaking groups in delegations to the government they carried on their own campaign for a quarter of a century by frequent petitions to the legislature and through articles in the Icelandic press. Their outstanding leader and editor was Mrs. Margrét Benedictson who carried on a sporadic correspondence with Dr. Stowe-Cullen and other Toronto suffragists.

As a matter of interest I have looked up particulars about the above mentioned society and have come to the conclusion that Mrs. Cleverdon must be talking about the Icelandic Women's Society, founded in 1881. Although its constitution is lost, women's rights must have been on the agenda because in January, 1890, articles appeared in *Heimskringla* with the heading "Málefni kvenna" (The affairs of women). In brackets under the heading, in Icelandic is (Under the auspices of the Icelandic Women's Society in Winnipeg). The first article is called "Hvöt" (The Spur) and is signed with the initials G.J.E. Several articles appear signed R. J. (likely Rebekka Johnson) J. J. and A. P. Eldon. Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran opened an attack on the Aid in Lögberg, with the heading "Kvennfélagið" denouncing the women for daring to write such articles, which in his estimation were far from being masterpieces in literature and only deserved to be called nonsense (rugl). *Heimskringla* also got its share of abuse for allowing the articles to be published. Anyone interested in reading the articles can find them in these papers starting on January 16, 1890. Mrs. Benedictsson's "Freyja" does not start its publication until 1898 and the

suffrage societies after that date and these events have all been written about before.

Although I have concentrated on the battle of the suffrage movement, which to me was our women's greatest public achievement, I am well aware of the other contributions made to our Icelandic communities. Were it not for our women's groups there probably would have been few churches. It was through the work of the Ladies Aids that sufficient money was raised to keep the churches going. They laid the foundation for establishing the Betel Home and founded two youth camps both at Hnauasa and Husavik. The women standing behind all these accomplishments are too numerous to mention though every society has had its leaders. Were I to start naming names the list would be a long one and most of you are more familiar with them than I am. In addition to all these undertakings we have many prominent women in the professions, such as: teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers, business women, artists, singers, writers, editors, lawyers and even politicians. I feel that I should mention our only Icelandic woman member in the legislative assembly, the late Salome Halldórssón — a teacher of excellent repute and a specialist in the teaching of the French language. Many of us might not have shared her political views, but that does not detract from her distinction of having been the only Icelandic woman to sit in the Manitoba legislature, from 1936-1941.

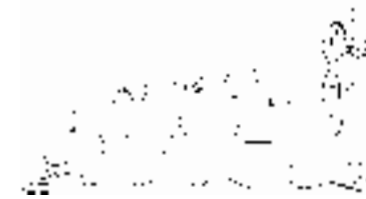
The battle for equality still goes on today and will continue tomorrow with "Rauðsokkur" in Iceland and Women's Lib in Canada fighting for the parity in wages between the sexes. But, the law of nature dictates that the one cannot survive without the other.

So far I have only touched on the battles but I would be remiss if I did not mention the non-battles, the working together of the sexes. The all important struggle for the building of a home. The building of our Canadian society is our best example. How the pioneer man and woman worked together to build the country goes down in history as a great achievement and the credit is divided equally between them. The men and women of yester years, today, and tomorrow, in spite of their differences, have worked together to build their homes and rear their children. Robert Burton expressed the sentiment in these words "No happiness is like unto it, no love so great

as that of man and wife, no such comfort as a sweet wife."

Looking back over the past hundred years we can see how much our Icelandic women have achieved and the next century will carry them to greater and greater achievements and they will, in spite of battles, still be their men's greatest inspiration and be to them as Lord Byron so frequently expressed it:

"Be thou the rainbow to the storms
of life,
The evening beam that smiles the
clouds away
and tints tomorrow with prophetic
rays"



A TRIBUTE TO MISS SIGRIDURHJARTARSON on her retirement as Matron of Betel Home, Gimli

The following excerpt from "a letter from the Howards", in the *Lake Centre News*, pays a well-deserved tribute to Miss Sigridur Hjartarson on her retirement as Matron of Betel Home, Gimli, Manitoba.

"Another change is coming to Gimli, in the retirement of Miss Sigridur Hjartarson as matron of the Betel Home. Sigga has been a staff member for more years than we can recall, and Matron since 1935. Her kind, motherly manner to the residents, and her

dedication, will not soon be forgotten. She has been on call twenty-four hours a day during all those years, and even after she moved into a home of her own, she would respond to calls at any hour of the night when someone was ill. She took her own free time to drive residents to Winnipeg for medical treatments, and many a time she has given up pleasures to attend to their needs. We know the residents of Betel will retain their affection for Sigga even though she is not with them now."

The Canadian Heart Foundation

The Canadian Heart Foundation at its annual meeting in Winnipeg in October, 1974, launched a nationwide campaign aimed at saving more lives among the great number of people suffering from heart attacks. There were numerous distinguished guest speakers at the meeting and papers presented and discussions were illuminating.

Heart disease and stroke are the nations Number One Killer and Disabler, the biggest plague since the Black Death. There are an average of 100,000 coronary infarctions among 22,000,000 Canadians, yearly. About 50,000 of the victims die.

Causes of heart attack are several. Important factors are cigarette smoking, diet with high animal fat or cholesterol content, overweight, lack of regular exercise, and stress.

A survey of teenagers reveals early danger signs:

60 percent smoke.

30 percent have high cholesterol.

30 percent are obese.

20 percent have high blood pressure.

Obesity is an important cause; 60 percent of the Canadian population over forty years of age are obese.

Smoking is an important cause. Male smokers between the ages of 35 to 54 are ten times more susceptible to heart attacks than non-smoking counterparts.

Stress. Dr. Selye illustrated the harmful effects of stress.

Diet. The typical Canadian diet is high in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Lack of exercise is an important factor. Any organ vegetates if it is not used.

In addition to the tragedy of deaths, heart disease is expensive in Canada; the economic loss it causes is estimated at one billion dollars yearly.

Canadians are near the top of the nations with the highest risk of heart attack in the world.

The remedies stressed are as follows.

Diet offers one of the major methods of prevention and treatment. Eat lean meat, fish, vegetables and fresh fruits, and skimmed milk whenever possible. Bake, boil, roast or broil instead of deep-fat frying. Understandably, a reduced intake is indicated in many cases.

Exercise is absolutely necessary. Make exercise an ingrained habit. A brisk walk daily is an easy and economical all-weather way. Swimming and jogging are excellent heart conditioners.

Immediate attention in the case of heart attack is important. Act quickly. The first four hours are the most critical. Mortality rate in hospitals has been reduced from 30 percent to 10-11 percent.

The Heart Foundation is perhaps the number one defence against heart disease. The Canadian Heart Foundation received from public campaigns and other sources in 1974, \$7,240,000. Since 1956, the Foundation has spent more than \$35,000,000 on Canadian heart research.

The Manitoba Heart Foundation hosted the meeting. —W.K.

Some Place-Name Legends

by Christopher S. Hale

(University of Alberta)

Since legends are connected with definite places, there is often a correlation between legends and place names. A place name will frequently contain a word referring to some supernatural being associated with it, or a place may be named after some person to whom something has happened there. Furthermore, many names, while not actually containing such elements, will sometimes have a legend linked to them.

In this article I should like to examine a few names from Öxnadalur, in northern Iceland near the city of Akureyri, along with their legends, and compare some of these legends with similar tales and traditions found in other parts of Iceland and in Norway.

Two words in Icelandic for spirits or non-human beings are *álfur* ('elf') and *huldufólk* ('hidden people'). These two words usually refer to the same beings, but certain Icelandic tales tell of these people preferring the name *huldufólk* as when one of them made the remark, "Við huldufólk erum ekki meiri álfar en þið mennirnir," ('We hidden people are no more elves than you human beings,') to a certain woman. The traditional account of the origin of the *huldufólk* over all of Scandinavia is as follows. Once God visited Adam and Eve, and he asked them to show him what they did. They showed him everything including their children, but some of them they had

hidden away because they had not been washed. God knew this, though, and said, "That which is hidden to me shall be hidden to men." Thus the descendants of these children became the "hidden people", and men can never see them unless they permit themselves to be seen.²

The two place names in Öxnadalur which contain the words *álfur* and *huldufólk* are *Álfaborg* ('fortress of the elves') and *Huldufólkskirkja* ('church of the hidden people'). *Álfaborg* is a very common place name in Iceland, and in the case of Öxnadalur it refers to a series of cliffs. Since elves and *huldufólk* lead a life very similar to the one humans do, it is quite natural that they should have their own dwelling places, and *Álfaborg* is one of them, according to the people of the valley. That they also had churches is witnessed by *Huldufólkskirkja* which is a large stone on one of the farms. It is said that many people have heard singing coming from this stone while passing by it during the evening. Two other names of dwelling places of elves are *Baðstofa* ('bathhouse') and *Kirkjuklettur* ('church cliff,') both of which are cliffs.

Legends about *útburður* ('the exposing of children') are quite common both in Iceland and in Norway. These legends are generally about unmarried mothers who expose their children to avoid shame, but since this was strictly against the teachings

of the church, such women could be severely punished if found out.

People would oftentimes think they heard the cries of these dead children in the mountains or in forests because they had died without being christened. To quiet these children, anyone might declare them christened on the spot by uttering some formula such as this one from Norway:

"Eg doyper deg þá von
anten Sigurd eller Jon."

(I christen you either Sigurd or Jon in the hope that this will quiet you)³. Frequently such a child would call out the name of its mother, and a person having testified to hearing this was once enough to condemn a young girl.

A legend about *útburður* is behind the name *Jóhönnukinn* ('mountain slope of Jóhanna'). A girl by the name of Jóhanna exposed her child at that place, and the crying of a child used to be able to be heard there. Possibly also associated with *útburður* is the legend behind *Kristínargrund* (grund 'grassy, flat land'). Here is believed to be the grave of a certain Kristín who according to a legend committed suicide after having borne a child by her brother, though whether or not she committed *útburður* is not told. The legend says that a farmer once cut hay on Kristín's grave and afterwards fell asleep there. In his dreams a woman came to him and angrily told him that he would get no profit out of having cut grass over her grave. Shortly afterwards many of the farmer's sheep died from an unknown plague, and since then this land has never been hayed. This fear of the power that the dead have over the living is also reflected in the name *Inguklettur* ('Inga's Cliff'). Long ago a little girl named Inga wandered up into the mountains while tending

sheep and fell from the cliff. Now this place is believed to be haunted by her spirit.

Skinndráttargjá ('ravine of the dragging of skins') has for its background a legend concerning Þorgeirsboli. According to folk tales Þorgeirsboli is a bull, either owned by a certain Þorgeir, or else it is Þorgeir himself in a bull's shape, which often appeared in northern Iceland in the days just before the Black Death in the 14th century. It was regarded as an omen foreboding evil. This bull had a very strange hide because it hung down from both sides of its flanks and dragged on the ground. Two ghosts or spirits called *Móri* and *Skotia* each rode on this hide, being pulled all over the northern part of the country on it.⁴ Supposedly, then, Þorgeirsboli happened at one time to come through this ravine, and that is how *Skinndráttargjá* got its name. More probably, however, someone used to have the habit of dragging goods on skins instead of a sled through the ravine, a custom which formerly was not uncommon, especially in winter. It is not unusual that the original meaning of a place name has been lost and that a new legend is created to explain it.

A curse is connected with *Hraunsvatn*, a lake near the farm *Hraun* ('stony stretch'), because of the poor fishing there. It is said that two sisters living on two different farms, each with its own lake, had a quarrel about fishing rights. The sister who owned *Hraunsvatn* refused to allow the other one to fish there. Thus the latter placed a curse on *Hraunsvatn* that there would always be bad luck and loss connected with it.

There are several places in *Öxnadalur* that are named after people mentioned in historical records or sagas. The farm *Geirhildargarður*

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('Geirhildur's farm') is named after a Geirhildur who is mentioned in *Landnámabók*, the Icelandic book of settlements. She was supposed to be versed in magic, but no legends seem to remain today concerning her.⁵ In the upper part of Öxnadalur is *Sörlahóll* ('hill of Sörli') where it is claimed that Sörli the Strong is buried who was slain by Þórður the Fighter in the Saga Age. That Sörli was killed by Þórður at Lurkasteinn in Öxnadalur is documented by *Þórðar saga hreðu*,⁶ but recent excavations at *Sörlahóll* have failed to uncover any remnants of a grave. Thus this legend possibly belongs to tradition and not to historical fact. *Gvendarbrunnur* ('Guðmundur's Spring') is named after a certain well-known bishop who died in 1237. This spring was supposedly blessed by this bishop, for its waters are unusually sweet. The name *Gvendarbrunnur* occurs all over Iceland⁷, and the legend behind it is probably related to similar ones in Norway about St. Olav who on his wanderings would stop to take a drink out of a well. After those visits these wells would contain very good water.

Other historical place-name legends have to do with *Kaupmannspollur* ('merchant's pool'), *Víghólar* ('battle hills') and *Þrætutunga* (disputed tongue of land'). Concerning the name *Kaupmannspollur* it is said that a merchant rode his horse accidentally into this pool and drowned. *Víghólar* is traditionally the place where *Víga-Glúmr* of *Víga-Glúms* saga fought one of his enemies, and supposedly several warriors are buried here. Nowhere in the sagas, however, is there mention of such a place. Any place name which has the first element *þræta* ('struggle, dispute') is generally a piece of land whose ownership has been questionable. Such a piece of land is *Þrætu-*

tunga, a name which is quite common on the borderlands of farms in Iceland. No definite legend concerning any of the *Þrætutungur* in Öxnadalur seems to have survived.

Legends often grow up around a place to explain some peculiarity of the landscape, the natural cause of which people did not understand. Such is the case with the two farms *Erga* and *Orree* in *Jæren*, Norway. These two farms are quite close together, but *Erga* has a great many stones on it while *Orre* has none. To explain this phenomenon, which we know today as probably being caused by glacial action, people in the old days did it this way. There were once two giants, the legend says, each of whom lived on one of these farms. One day they wished to have a contest to see which of them would get up earliest in the morning. The first one to get up was to start throwing stones over to the other one's farm where they were to remain lying, for the other giant was not allowed to throw them back. This was what happened, and since the giant from *Orre* won, this explains why there are more stones at *Erga* and none at *Orre*.⁸

The legend behind *Skessusteinn* ('troll woman's stone') in Öxnadalur tries to explain a similar phenomenon as the one on *Jæren*, for this stone is situated alone out in the middle of a farmyard. According to *Víga-Glúms* saga when *Víga-Glúmr* lived on the farm called *Þverbrekka*, a woman wished to irk him and accordingly made a snide remark. When he did not pay any attention to her, she made this stone tumble down from the cliff above into the yard of the farm. Another lone stone in the middle of a field is *Grýlusteinn* ('giant woman's stone'). I have not been able to discover any legend concerning this stone.

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but undoubtedly a similar incident happened with it as happened with **Skessusteinn**.

The two words **skessa** and **grýla** are rather interesting because they exist almost exclusively in Iceland. A **skessa** is a troll woman of sorts, belonging to that race of supernatural beings which could be classified under the general heading of "troll". Trolls are normally large and rather malicious, though quite stupid and easily outwitted. Whereas the **huldufólk** were readily believed in, trolls belonged almost exclusively to the world of fantasy and

bygone days. Legends and stories concerning **skessur** are very numerous in Iceland, but in Norway there are very few instances where a **skjessa** is mentioned, and she seems to be almost synonymous with a troll. The word **grýla** exists only in Iceland and must have some connection with the verb **grýla** ('to roar, bellow'). Stories about the **Grýla** are no longer current, but they are mentioned in older literature, and she appears to be a member of the troll family who steals children. □

The following have for their first elements the names of people. For ex-

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ample, **Þorkelsnes** ('Þorkell's ness') is named after a young boy, Þorkell Pálsson, who in the previous century was a shepherd there. He had a falling-out with the farmer for whom he worked, and the farmer beat him to death. In order to cover up the killing, it was reported that Þorkell had lost his way one night in the fog while he was tending sheep and had an accident because he was not watching where he was going. Both **Þorgnýjarskeið** (Þorgnýr's cliff wall) and **Þorgnýjarskál** (Þorgnýr's depression) are named after a little girl who fell from this cliff and was later found dead in the depression below. **Skúlaklettur** ('Skúli's cliff') is named after a young boy who went out and hung himself by his trouser suspenders on a pinnacle jutting out from this cliff. **Þorbjarnartunga** ('Þorbjörn's tongue of land') is named after a stallboy who in the old days went up to the cow barn one snowy evening to milk. On his way back to the farm he lost his way. He was not found until quite a while later on this tongue of land, still holding both his milking pails.

There are several other place names in Öxnardalur which have personal names for their first elements, but the legends behind them have been lost in the course of time. These are **Bjarnarkofi** ('Björn's hut'), **Ingveldarfönn** ('Ingveldur's snowfield'), **Jónsgerði** ('Jón's fenced-in land'), **Randverskinn** ('Randver's slope'), **Skjaldarstaðir** ('Skjöld's farm'), **Steinsstaðir** ('Steinn's farm'), and **Þórðargerði** ('Þórður's fenced-in land').

Undoubtedly many more legends were once current in Öxnardalur than these. Due to the tendency, though, of the population to move to the cities, many of the old farmsteads are now deserted and their legends forgotten. What with such modern innovations as radio and television, new forms of entertainment are replacing the old pastime of story-telling. Thus if one were to travel to any part of Iceland a generation from now, there would probably be almost no one there who could remember any of the old legends first-hand. The same thing is happening all over Scandinavia, and therefore it is very important to collect these legends before they disappear forever.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar Þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, Reykjavík: 1956-61, vol. I, p. 3
- 2 Árnason, I, 7.
- 3 *Norsk folkedikting*, Det norske samlegt, Oslo: 1963, p. 81.
- 4 Árnason, I, 334-338.
- 5 "Geirhildr hét fjölkunnig kona og meinsöm." ('Geirhildr was the name of an evil woman versed in magic.') *Landnámabók*, CCXXV.
- 6 *Þórðar saga hreðu*, XXII.
- 7 Cf., Gösta Franzén, *Laxdælabygdens ornam*, Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien, Uppsala: 1964, p. 91.
- 8 Olav T. Beito, *Norske malforettekster*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1963, pp. 241-242.
- 9 *Víga-Glúms saga*, XXVI.
- 10 Cf., Árnason, I, 207-210.

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HAROLD S. SIGURDSON, ICELANDIC CONSUL IN VANCOUVER, B. C.

Harold S. Sigurdson, formerly of Riverton and Winnipeg, Manitoba, has been appointed Icelandic Consul in Vancouver, British Columbia. He succeeds the late Mr. John Sigurdson in the post.

On graduation as a chartered accountant he entered the service of Dunwood and Company of Fort William, Ontario. He saw service with the Royal Canadian Air Force in the years 1939 to 1945.

In 1960, Dunwood and Company posted him to Vancouver, and he is now a partner in the firm there.

Mr. Sigurdson is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Sigurbjorn Sigurdson, formerly of Riverton and Winnipeg. He is married; his wife is the former

Norma Benson of Winnipeg. They have four children.

★

ERIC STEFANSON APPOINTED TO MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Mr. Eric Stefanson, General Manager of the Interlake Development Corp., has been appointed to the Environmental Council of Manitoba. Mr. Stefanson's appointment will be for a two year term.

★

Don W. Axford, formerly of Winnipeg, has been re-appointed chairman of the board of Lutheran Life Insurance Society, Calgary. Mr. Axford has also been appointed chairman of the British Society, Calgary. He is a director and vice-president and director of Mobile Oil of Canada.

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A man sat in front of us at the theatre.
 We had come to watch a Spanish dance company
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 And we were not disappointed.
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 The colors, movement and sound
 Filled all of us with a stirring of passion.

The man sitting in front of us was grey.
 He sat beside his wife and son.
 The wife was dumpy and looked dull
 The son looked to them for understanding
 Of the images before him.
 I watched the man in wonder,
 Questioning why he found interest
 In the controlled abandonment of Andalusian dancers

The male dancers were virile and yet supple,
 As they moved their feet and bodies
 In rapid response to the castanets,
 And the erotic patterns created by the guitars,
 And the sound of their own feet,
 Which formed a staccato accompaniment
 To the background sounds.
 The women were desirable in their
 Close-fitting dresses which ended in huge flounces.

The man in front of us clapped,
 Even in his grey fashion.
 As my wife and I left the theatre
 Walking to our car through
 The flotsam of a skid-row,
 We saw the grey man and his wife and child.
 They danced along the street,
 Snapping their fingers as if they were castants,
 And singing Olé.

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BOOK REVIEWS

GRETTIR'S SAGA

Translated by Denton Fox and Hermann Pálsson.

University of Toronto Press (1974), pp. XIII and 199 with illustrations and maps. Price: \$3.00.

Grettir's Saga is among the best-known Sagas of the Icelanders (Íslendingasögur). Because of his shrewdness and rare physical attributes the 11th century protagonist of the saga has remained one of Iceland's celebrated folk heroes. Every Icelander knows something about Grettir the Strong. Huge boulders known as Grettir's lifts (grettistökk or grettishöf) are scattered all over Iceland. Grettir is said to have tossed these rocks about at one time or another. Therefore they commemorate his superhuman strength. In reading Grettir's Saga one is nevertheless reminded of the fact that mental and physical prowess may not bring good luck. The life of our hero was indeed fraught with disaster. Having spent nineteen years of his life as an outlaw, he was killed by ruthless enemies who used witchcraft and other devious means to achieve their end.

The reader may wonder if Grettir's misfortunes were indeed ordained by fate or the consequences of his conduct. Throughout his life he showed extraordinary reluctance to submit to authority of any kind. Perhaps this was an inherited trait from viking forefathers who came to Iceland to seek freedom from expanding royal authority in Norway. Through bitter experience some of these men were to find out that freedom cannot exist outside the context of some kind of social

order. To be able to survive in pre-Christian Iceland they had to compromise their non-conformist attitudes. After the conversion of the Icelanders to Christianity in the year 1000 A.D., not only were they expected to compromise important principles of heathen ethics but had to abandon some of them altogether.

Grettir the Strong, we must remember, was born and raised in a Christian society where a new moral code had just been introduced expounding such concepts as free choice, compassion, perilous consequences of prideful acts, just and unjust motives, self-knowledge, and remorse. This new order placed vastly increased restrictions on individual liberties. Accordingly, one must assume that many of the self-willed actions attributed to Grettir in his saga, must have been judged more severely in a society which had sanctioned the Christian faith by law than would have been the case with comparable conduct in pre-Christian Iceland where, given the right circumstances, revenge might be a moral obligation.

Grettir's inability to submit to authority of any kind resulted in his alienation from society. This dilemma in turn created a profound inner conflict which the hero experienced as visitations of a monstrous character. In the end Grettir the Strong was laid low by hostile forces from two opposite directions.

The scenes in Grettir's Saga extend from Iceland to Byzantium. The saga is skillfully composed, and one must assume that even though its early 14th-century author incorporated some

elements of fact in his narrative, the saga is first and foremost a work of literature. He also drew freely on a number of earlier Sagas of Icelanders, and many of the episodes he describes have their parallels in medieval European literature. Certain similarities between the saga and the 8th-century Old England epic Beowulf have been studied by a number of scholars.

The first two English translations of Grettir's Saga, by Eiríkur Magnússon and William Morris (London, 1869), and by G. Ainslie Hight (London, 1914) became popular in their time despite their archaic style. The third and latest English translation by Hermann Pálsson, reader in Icelandic at the University of Edinburgh, and Denton Fox chairman of the English Dept., Victoria College, University of Toronto, by far surpasses its two predecessors. It is of a high stylistic quality and as accurate as a translation can be. The translators' brief introduction contains the most concise and

perceptive analysis ever made of Grettir's Saga. Their epilogue to the translation on the social and legal background of the saga is enlightening and serves a most useful purpose for readers with no previous acquaintance with Old Icelandic literature.

During the last fifteen years Hermann Pálsson and his colleagues have produced English translations of most of the major Sagas of the Icelanders and of many other types of sagas besides. All these have been of the highest quality and have won universal acclaim.

The new translation of Grettir's Saga is a worthy addition to their previous achievements. The Toronto University Press deserves praise for its excellent production of the saga. Canadians of Icelandic descent have now been given a rare opportunity to order from one of their own publishing houses a moderately priced and outstanding work by one of their illustrious ancestors.

—Haraldur Bessason



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Philip M. Petursson, D.D.

MLA — WELLINGTON

IN SEARCH OF A POET

by Roy St. George Stubbs
Peguis Publishing Limited,
Winnipeg, 1975 25 pp.

Price: \$2.00

It may be that some Canadians of Icelandic descent have not fully realized that amongst them were two poets who, under ordinary circumstances, would have gained international recognition, but because they wrote in a language known only to a very few, seemed destined to share the fate of those whom the English poet, Thomas Gray, had in mind when he wrote, "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air."

It seems paradoxical that two men of British descent played a major part in rescuing their memory from comparative oblivion. One of them, Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, an accomplished linguist, who some years ago was a professor at United College, Winnipeg, went "in search of a poet." He found him in the person of Stephan G. Stephansson, The Rocky Mountain Poet.

Having attained an amazing proficiency in the Icelandic language, he translated some of his poems. Incidentally, Professor F. Stanton Cawly, of Harvard University, refers to Stephansson as "the greatest poet of the Western World" (Scandinavian Studies and Notes, Volume 15, 1938).

Now Judge Roy St. George Stubbs of Winnipeg's Family Court, in a treatise, "In Search of a Poet", plays his part in perpetuating the memory of Guttormur J. Guttormsson, the Riverton farmer "who wrote great poetry". When a student at the University of Manitoba Judge Stubbs had the good fortune of being in close contact with that beloved humanitarian and poet, Dr. Sigurður Júlíus Jóhannesson, who aroused in him an interest in Icelandic poetry in general, and in that of Guttormur J. Guttormsson in particular.

Judge Stubbs deserves the gratitude of not only Icelandic Canadians but also those of other ethnic origins in making known to them one facet of the rich mosaic of which Canadian culture is comprised. With characteristic modesty he writes, "I would have ac-

cepted any literary judgement of Dr. Jóhannesson's and I determined to see what I could find out about the Icelandic farmer whose work as a poet drew such praise from him. As the prisoner of one language, it is not a great deal, but here are some of the details of my research for a poet".

The reader of this fine treatise cannot but be impressed not only by the evidence of painstaking research, but also by the obvious rapport he has with the poet's work, albeit that his only contact with it is via the pale

shadow of the translation of "the literary treasures hidden away in an unknown language". In it may be found a translation of Guttormsson's finest poem "Sandy Bar" by Paul Bjarnason, and of the last stanza of the poem by Hon. W. J. Lindal and Dr. B. H. Olson, also of the hauntingly beautiful "Góða Nótt" (Good Night) by Jakobina Johnson

The reader will be impressed not only by the content of this treatise, but also by the vivid, succinct English in which it is written examples of



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which follow: "My hope is that I have suggested something of the beauty and the divinity of the life of a simple Icelandic Canadian farmer, who wrote great poetry", and "Guttormur is, indeed, entitled to sit in the company

of the great poets of the world."

On behalf of Icelandic Canadians and, indeed, of all Canadians irrespective of ethnic origins, thank you, Judge Stubbs.

—Axel Vopnfjord

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