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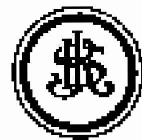

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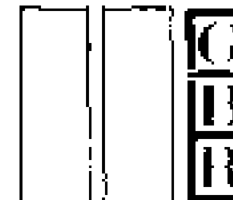

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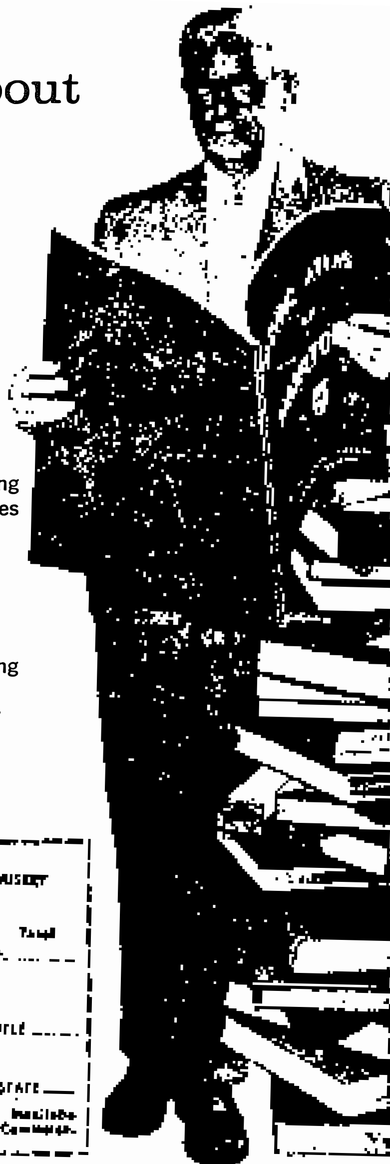

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## EDITORIAL

Winter, in the Northern Temperate Zone, is regarded the coldest season of the year and includes the months of December, January and February. In the astronomical year it is the period between the winter solstice and the vernal equinox.

In spite of snow and ice, blizzards, winds of high velocity and temperatures dipping down to the low 30's it can be a season of particular beauty. Drive along the highway on a bright moonlit night and behold the lights from the farmstead windows casting their rays across the freshly fallen snow; come out on a bright, cold, frosty morning to find the trees and shrubs clothed in glittering hoarfrost; or see tiny snowflakes on a window pane formed in patterns of the finest lace woven in intricate design; feel the crunch of snow as you walk along the pathways creating a rhythm which sends thoughts ascending to ethereal heights.

Spring is the season of the year when plants, which have lain dormant all winter, begin to grow. In the Northern Temperate Zone it includes the months of March, April and May.

Nature has fitted trees and flowers, each in it's own way, to meet winter snow and summer heat. In the early spring there is a veritable symphony of sound as a sleeping world is awakened with the joy that winter is past. Leaves flutter in the breeze; birds trill their merry song; animals dart to and fro with happy abandon and frogs add their throaty bass to the voice of spring. Listen to the patter of rain on the rooftops adding it's sound to the symphony and say with William Walsham How:

> Everything rejoices in the mellow rays,
> All earth's thousand voices swell the psalm of praise.

**Mattie Halldorson**



# A Sense of National Heritage, Pride and Purpose

An address by **Dr. Hugh H. Saunderson**, President of the University of Manitoba, delivered at the annual concert of The Icelandic Canadian Club, Winnipeg, February 19, 1963

May I first say what a pleasure it is to be here. When I was invited to speak to you, I knew that I would meet a warm welcome, and that I at least would enjoy it, but I began to wonder what I could or should say that would be appropriate and helpful. I was reasonably confident that your programme committee didn't think I was of Icelandic origin, even if my name ends with a "son". I can't claim that distinction, at least as far back as it seemed wise to trace my family tree. But for the Scots (my ancestors) and for those of Icelandic blood, there is a similarity of economic and social background which seemed not a bad starting point for us jointly to look at some of the qualities which will make for a great nation here. In this group, then, whose ancestors came to a young and pioneering Canada, it seems appropriate to think of the contribution which groups such as yours and mine have made and should continue to make to the development of Canada.

Many of us are having our attention directed forward to 1967, when we will celebrate our centenary. With only four years to go to reach that stage of our maturity, it is proper that we should be thinking of the ways in which this event might be most wisely and joyously celebrated. There are national, provincial and local committees already established, and suggestions are already coming forward in large number. There are reports about a national library, a national center for the study of the humanities and the social sciences, a series of parks and athletic facilities, an art and music center for Manitoba, new buildings to house those activities in the cultural fields which we have not yet built, but should have. Let me say at once that I have no objection to these suggested new buildings. Most of them are long overdue.

Particularly at this time, when we of the University are engaged in a campaign to raise funds for new buildings, I should be one of the last to object to the erection of buildings needed to meet our growing responsibilities. However, in my work at the University, I am acutely conscious of the much greater importance of the attitudes of people and the types of activity which are contained within these buildings than I am about the buildings themselves. It isn't the outer shell protecting us from the elements which is the really important part, useful and necessary though it may be. It is the spirit of those within.

So it should be, I think, for our Centenary. I would like to see a far greater emphasis on 1967 being a year

by which we have achieved a sense of national pride, and a feeling of national maturity. It should be a year when we can properly look into a very large mirror and say with justification that we are proud of ourselves as individuals and as members of the Canadian nation. We should focus our thinking, not on a new library building, but on the desire and need of our people to read those books which a library would contain; we should be concerned not so much about a music auditorium as such but about the interest in and support of good music as a characteristic of Canadians. A new sports building isn't much use unless we as a people are interested in physical fitness. In other words, let us think a little about 1967 as a year to mark and stimulate our growth as a people, not as an occasion to erect monuments.

What are some of the characteristics or elements through which we can develop a sense of national heritage, pride and purpose? I will take time to mention only a few from among the many that could be discussed, and if in this group I select some where the illustrations are drawn from your own background, you should surely pardon me.

The first element I would list is a respect for and love of learning. As a professional educator, I would naturally think of that in a primary place, but many of you who have other vocations would join me in according to true scholarship a place second to no other.

It is not surprising that the Selkirk settlers, when they first established themselves in this country, built a school as one of the earliest of community buildings. The Scots, as a race, have long given great prestige to their school-masters, and no one familiar with the history of Scottish universities is unaware of the sacrifice of the people which made possible the high standard of the institutions and the presence therein of young men and women whose families strained every resource to make their attendance possible.

The Icelanders have had the same attitude. For generations in their homeland, a love of learning and scholarship has been one of the most marked national characteristics. This attitude came to Canada with the early settlers. Not only did they start building schools and academies wherever a community was gathered, but the indivdual families regarded a library of books in the home as one of the major necessities. Mav I say that I have become quite well aware of this through the frequent and valuable gifts of books for our Icelandic library which we as a University have received from families in all parts of the country.

That love of learning and of scholarship was the major factor in the decision of your group to raise enough money to endow the Icelandic Chair at the University. Even a cursory glance at the number and size of gifts which made that dream into a reality would show that sacrifices for this purpose are not a lost tradition.

Nor is this only a characteristic of the Scots and the Icelanders. In my position, I have an opportunity to see what members of other ethnic groups are doing to enable their sons and daughters to attend the University. Sometimes I doubt that the young folk realize fully what sacrifices their parents are making to permit them to gain the benefits of higher education. For a time, I thought that perhaps this sacrificial support of education



had diminished among those of the Anglo-Saxon and French tradition, but our recent experience in the Capital Fund Campaign has shown a willingness among all elements in the community to help in this task.

A second characteristic which has marked our past and should mark our future is a feeling of self-reliance and courage. Certainly our forebears came to this country not with any assurance of security and a life of ease provided by the efforts of others. They came to a new and hazardous life, sure only that, if they were to succeed, it would be by their own efforts. The hazards they met and surmounted were legion, and few would have blamed them if their courage had failed. But their courage didn't fail, nor their self-reliance desert them. Gradually, with herculean effort, they established their homes and farms and towns.

That was before social security was something the government provided: it was something one created for oneself. Maybe I'm just getting old, and am too old-fashioned, but I think one of our greatest hazards for the future of Canada is that so many people assume that the "Government" owes them a living, whether they do anything about it as individuals or not. I am fully aware that in our more complex society, ill-health or economic trends may make it difficult or impossible for the bread-winner of a family to continue to support his family and we as a community can't allow them to starve. But I am not convinced that such a person should regard support for his family by others as a normal characteristic of being a Canadian. Our parents and grandparents didn't think so. They regarded their own self-reliance as more of a desirable characteristic than we are apt to do today. Perhaps by 1967 we may move back toward this traditional virtue.

What gave these earlier people the self-reliance and courage to which I have referred? A long history of wresting a living from a stubborn soil, and an inhospitable climate undoubtedly contributed but I think also that one of the major factors was a profound religious faith. When a person feels that he is a child of his Creator, and that his God is watching over him, he has the assurance that enables him to walk erect in the presence of trouble and difficulty. That faith is one of the great elements of our heritage.

I have mentioned a love of learning, and a feeling of self-reliant courage as two characteristics of our forefathers. Certainly a third would be a sense of friendliness and generosity to others. It may have been that the difficulties all families faced made them more conscious of their neighbors, and more anxious to befriend them. You would know better than I whether the report is true that in every Icelandic home, it was a matter of custom to keep a pot of coffee on the back of the stove, always ready to serve a friendly cup to any visitor. The Scots didn't always serve coffee, but any Scottish housewife would feel a sense of embarrassment or shame if she didn't offer a visitor some hospitality.

In a more substantial way, generosity and friendliness were expressed to those in trouble in many forms. If a farmer's barn burned or blew down, it was only a natural reaction to organize a "bee" and get most of the neighborhood to assist in erecting a new one. If a man happened to break his leg at a busy season, his friends would arrange to plough his fields, or plant his seed or harvest his crops. This was thought of as just neighborliness.

In many parts of the country, this happy expression of personal concern for a neighbor in distress is still the custom, and I hope it ever continues. But many of us live in cities or large towns where such direct help is not feasible. How can we participate in expressing our concern? One of the many ways is through our community organizations such as the Community Chest or the Red Cross. Their function is to help those in need, and their work is made possible only by our personal participation in it. We as citizens of Winnipeg should hang our heads in shame that, in a majority of the past ten years, our local Community Chest has failed to reach the minimum objective needed to provide help to those in our midst who really need it. If we lived in the country, and the call went out to help in a barn-building bee, we'd all be there; but because we are called on to help through an intermediary such as a Community Chest, we don't do our part.

Students in the University are frequently doing things that cause their elders some embarrassment, just as we caused our elders embarrassment when we were students, and as the future children of our present students will cause their parents embarrassment twenty years from now. But while I note this fact, I want also to point out to you that this past year, in two blood drives, the students contributed nearly 3,000 bottles of blood to help those who needed it. Just when the newspapers were giving excellent coverage to the admitted lack of judgement and good taste in the Engineering supplement to our student newspaper, The Manitoban, they seemed to feel that the action of one of the fraternities in spending a day repairing toys and equipment in a local day-nursery was not worthy of any mention.

Tonight I am speaking about being Canadians, and I might add a word on this phase of my topic at the national level. Canada early embarked on a programme of help to other countries that needed it very much, through the Colombo Plan, and more recently through aid to a number of newly established African countries. Yet I am told that when the word "austerity" began to move through Ottawa circles, these programmes of external aid to the less fortunate peoples of the globe were among the first to suffer. I hope my information is incorrect, but as it came to me from a representative of one of these countries, I fear that it was true. Would it be improper to suggest that we in Canada, who really have so much, should think much more seriously about the level of our gifts to others in far greater need?

A fourth characteristic in our tradition which we should be concerned about as we plan for our centennial year is a sense of personal and national integrity. What about that old phrase "His word is as good as his bond"? Is there any danger that this may become "Get him to sign it and get at least two witnesses"? Frankly, I don't think people are more inclined to be irresponsible than they used to be. Others seem to be more pessimistic. Recently, in the cartoon strip "They'll do it every time", the cartoonist showed a man in the first picture offering to give 100 pounds of chocolates to a Christmas drive on behalf of an orphanage. The second frame showed Jones, the organizer, coming to collect on this promise, and the donor instructing his secretary to throw Jones out, with the explanation that the boss was in business to make money, not to give it away. Frankly, I can't conceive of this as a fair reflection of what people will do even rarely, let alone in "They'll do it every time".

Although people are not, I think, less apt to meet their financial pledges than they were a generation or two ago, I think that there may be a decreasing sense of personal responsibility for the proper running of one's community. This is a different aspect of integrity. People will grumble about the way in which our government (local, provincial or national) is run, and yet if they are asked to run for office, they will plead that they are far too busy, or that politics is much too dirty for them to get involved. It is only if good candidates are prepared to come forward and be elected that we can expect to have good government. There is also a willingness to accept as proper a series of promises by a candidate for public office which neither the candidate nor his listeners expect to be implemented.

While I am speaking about integrity, I think that I may be pardoned if I say a little about one matter that troubled me recently. Because this is in the political field, I have chosen my words with some care, and I'll keep close to my notes. Recently, there has been a very vigorous discussion about weapons for Canadian units in NORAD and NATO being equipped with nuclear warheads. The U.S. State Department issued a press release which at least inferred that Canada had not lived up to its commitment to accept these nuclear warheads as a part of its responsibility in NORAD and NATO. Spokesmen for all four parties reprimanded the State Department for its press release as an interference in our Canadian affairs. Now one may feel that we should equip our units with nuclear warheads, or one may feel equally honestly that we should not do so. What gave me concern was that the question of whether we had made such a commitment and were not honoring it seemed to be quite secondary. I still don't know for sure whether the Canadian Government made such a commitment or not, and I'd certainly like to know. If the Government made such a commitment (and here I am not making any judgement on the wisdom of any commitment made), I do feel that the United States had every right to draw to our attention its view that we should honour a commitment made on our behalf by our Government. My I repeat that if our Government made such a commitment, we should not damn the U.S. for calling it to our attention, even if it proves politically embarrassing to any or all of our parties. In other words, I feel that honesty or integrity in government is more important than a temporary political embarrassment.

The final characteristic which I hope will be strongly evident among our people in our centennial year is a genuine desire to think first about what we can contribute to Canada rather than what we can get from Canada. Whether as individuals or as groups, we all have much that we can give that will make Canada a better place for all our young people than it now is. Is this what we are working toward? There has been substantial amount of discussion recently about Canada being a bi-cultural country, with the English and French cultures singled out. Those of us who live in the western provinces know that there are other groups and cultures present here too so that we are a country with a multi-cultual background. To the earlier English, Irish, Scottish and French cultures, we have added the

Icelandic, the Ukrainian, the German, the Italian and the Dutch, to name only a few. Each of these groups has its own characteristics, and if the strengths and good qualities of each are incorporated in the Canada of tomorrow, we will have a country that will make all of us happy. But these strengths must be incorporated into the general pattern of Canada.

Some months ago, on another occasion, I suggested an anology which I feel is worth repeating. In a good Christmas cake, one puts flour, and butter and raisins and currants and salt and cherries and peel and almonds and doubtless many other ingredients. If each of these ingredients is blended into the cake, it is a success. But if some of them are not properly incorporated, so that their inherent goodness is not added to the rest of the cake, the finished product lacks something which it might have had.

In some communities, there is a tendency toward self-segregation which impoverishes the country as a whole. One of the greatest contributions of the Icelandic community in Canada has been a willingness to think of themselves as Canadians, and to think of what in their background they could bring forward to enrich their adopted country. Not all of the racial or ethnic groups have followed this good example. Sometimes, for reasons that are not above suspicion, these groups are encouraged to band together, and stay aloof from the general community. Leaders of these groups then use the concentrated voting power of their followers as a lever to extract from governments favors which are not infrequently of greater benefit to the individual leaders than they are to their communities or to Canada.

Whenever I hear the spokesmen for any groups start to talk about the "rights" of his group, I wonder if he is giving as much thought to the responsibilities which that group has toward the well-being of Canada. And yet if we are to pass the 100th milestone of our history with the assurance of a better century ahead of us, it is incumbent on all of us to think more about our responsibilities to our country than our rights to favors from our country.

During these few minutes, I have outlined some of the things which we as Canadians could contribute toward making our centennial a great occasion. If to our adopted country we could contribute in an effective way our love of learning, our sense of self-reliant courage, our generosity and friendliness to others, our sense of integrity, and our willingness to contribute to Canada more than we claim from Canada, we can pass our anniversary with our heads held high. There is a great satisfaction in living up to one's highest ideals, a satisfaction that far surpasses the pleasure in looking at new and magnificent buildings. Those qualities of mind and spirit which our forefathers passed to us as our heritage are the most valuable and most enduring gifts we can pass on to those who will take our places. It is these that will make the Canada of the future the place we all pray it will become.



# To Span the Ocean — Að brúa hafið

It may be truly said that almost from the day the Icelanders first set foot on North American soil they have posed to themselves the question: how can we maintain touch with the people, with all we left behind? The need of communication with the people of the Motherland, and, indeed, with one another in widely separated districts, or within the one district when travel was difficult, was immediately realized. It became the subject of editorial comment in Winnipeg Icelandic weeklies in the eighties. When the old Icelandic Students' Society was at the height of its activities during the decade, 1905 to 1915, the subject "Að brúa hafið" was the theme in oration and essay contest.

This emphasis, from the very beginnings of Icelandic settlement, increasing rather than decreasing during the years, has its significant interpretation. To 'span the ocean' definitely implied that there was to be no return—except by visit. The Icelandic immigrants came to America resolved that here would be their future home. They thought as Rurik of Kiev, Rollo of Normandy, Ingólfur Arnarson of Iceland. But, to continue the figure of speech in reverse, there was to be no burning of bridges. Though largely of the mind, bridges had to be maintained. Tangible steps for that purpose were taken immediately and have been continued ever since.

The first such step was to establish contacts with one another. A hand-written paper was started in Gimli within a few months after the first settlers arrived in October 1875. A year later a printed paper was launched at Lundi, now Riverton. In 1883 a paper was started in Winnipeg through which contacts could be maintained with all the Icelandic settlements. Since that time there has been a continuous publication of Icelandic weeklies and periodicals. Subscriptions from Iceland have always been encouraged.

But there was no thought of establishing an Icelandic "island within". Early in 1876 a local school was formed to teach English. Later Icelandic was included in these locally financed and administered schools.

The first step taken towards the establishing of permanent settlement in New-Iceland was the enacting of democratic laws and regulations for this "Icelandic Reserve" in Canadian unorganized territory. Care was taken to make it plain that the enactment provided for a subordinate government. Directives from Ottawa were to be heeded and applicable federal ordinances willingly accepted.

When it was suggested, shortly after the Municipality of Gimli was organized in 1887, that the private schools in the area should be continued so both English and Icelandic could be taught, strong editorial objection was raised in an Icelandic Winnipeg weekly. In the editorial the position taken was:

"Icelanders must learn the national language (English) — learn the history of this country and become a part of the citizenry of this land."

This stopped whatever agitation there was for continued local schools.

At present both Icelandic and English are used in our publications. Some are primarily in Icelandic; others are almost exclusively in English. Collectively they may be said to be at once Icelandic and English as they serve both an Icelandic and a Canadian purpose. They seek to discharge a dual responsibility: to preserve and fuse into the Canadian scene cultural values in the Icelandic heritage; to make an ample contribution which will be to the enrichment of the national identity that is being evolved in this land.

It is on that high level that the desire to span the ocean to Iceland continues without abatement, and it is in that way that the best in the Icelandic heritage can be preserved and made a reinforcing element in our Canadian nation-building. "Að brúa hafið" is still strong and in its twofold purpose is needed.

Now it is discovered that an agency has somewhat fortuitously come into existence which may be able to provide tangible material to the erection and maintenance of that cultural bridge. That it should be able to provide tangible material to something largely of the mind appears paradoxical but yet is realistic. The agency is Icelandic Airlines Loftleiðir.

Fortunately, or rather as one would expect, those who direct Loftleiðir share our views and our hopes. It is for that reason that The Icelandic Canadian is so proud and happy to be able to place on the front cover of this number of the magazine a striking picture of one of the aircraft, together with pictures of Alfreð Elíasson, the General Manager, and Sigurður Magnússon, the Director of Public Relations.

These men and others who serve with them, no less than people on this side of the ocean, have sought to bridge the Atlantic. In no more tangible way could that cultural bridge be built than through scheduled weekly trips by Loftleiðir between Winnipeg and Iceland.

### Icelandic Airlines Loftleiðir

Icelandic Airlines Loftleiðir was founded March 10, 1944. It is interesting to note that it was founded by three young pilots who had then recently returned to Iceland after several years of training and flying experience in Canada. They received their first training from Connie Johannesson, who operates Johannesson Flying Services of Winnipeg. Their secondary training was provided by the Royal Canadian Air Force and from then on they became civilian employees with the Air Observers School (AOS) to train air force personnel, not only Canadian but other Allied Air Forces as well.

At first Loftleiðir was in the domestic air service in Iceland. In 1946 the company bought its first long range aircraft and named it Hekla. The first flight, Iceland to Copenhagen, was made in the year 1947 on June 17, Iceland's National Independence Day. In 1948 the Company was authorized to fly between Iceland and the United States. Flights between Iceland and New York have been maintained ever since.

The expansion of the overseas service and the Company's objective can be gathered from the following excerpts from a publicity report issued May 14, 1962.

"In 1952 a through service with no change of plane was started between the United States and the Continent of Europe, on a regular scheduled basis. In 1952 and 1953 one weekly flight in each direction across the Atlantic was made. In 1954 this was increased to three weekly flights. Again in 1955 the frequency was stepped up to five weekly flights and this continued during 1956. The foregoing frequency was maintained during the peak season with a slightly lower frequency during the winter months. In the spring of 1957 daily services between the United States and the ports of call in Northern Europe were maintained during the high season, and from April 1, 1962, eleven weekly flights will be flown in each direction between the United States and Europe, via Iceland . . . .

"The Company's services are operated by Douglas DC-6B Cloudmaster aircraft which are somewhat slower than the more modern types used by the IATA companies. However, the DC-6B is a safe, proven and dependable aircraft which ranks among the top in accumulated flying experience. . . .

"The activities of Loftleiðir have had a profound effect in its home country. The aircraft not only overcame the isolation of the remote parts of Iceland, it also, solely because of the activities of Loftleiðir, overcame the age-old isolation of the country itself."

Having overcome the "age-old isolation" of Iceland and the many erroneous impressions of an island named "Iceland" far out in the North Atlantic the men who direct the destinies of Loftleiðir are beginning to dream as Icelandic settlers in America and their descendants have dreamt: that the ocean separating the people of Iceland and their kith and kin across the sea could be spanned. These men have in mind something more than a purely commercial service. They have also in mind a cultural service to the mutual advantage of both. Put in realistic language, their dream, equally as ours, is that a regular weekly service be established direct between Winnipeg and Reykjavík. It could be a direct short flight, via Goose Bay or Thule, to Iceland, or a long through-flight, originating in the United States and terminating via Winnipeg and Iceland in Continental Europe.

This hope, this dream of a cultural yet realistic bridge, is shared by all who see merit and find inspiration in messages conveyed across. If it materializes, would it be blasphemy or profanity to say that the settlers, the editors of the eighties and the departed students of half a century ago, will smilingly watch from above?

### Winnipeg, an International Airport?

But dreams at times suffer the shock of realities. Stevensons Airfield in St. James is known as the Winnipeg International Airport. But it is international in little more than its name. With the exception of some flights originating in the United States, and special chartered flights, foreign aircraft are not allowed to land at the Winnipeg Airport and let off or take on passengers.

Geography, if nothing else, dictates that Winnipeg should be an international airport. Indeed it has already been recognized as such. The Modern Canadian Atlas of the World, published in Toronto, has a full page map of the Northern Hemisphere on which Winnipeg is the centre. Distances from Winnipeg across the North Pole, across Greenland and Labrador reveal how practical it is for North America that Winnipeg be, in fact, an international airport.

With the rapid growth of air transport it would appear that there should be three Canadian international air-

ports, one in the east, one in Winnipeg and one on the west coast. That probably will be the final permanent plan for Canadian international air service. Obviously for the proper and efficient operation of such service each international Canadian airport should be a fully equipped base for overhaul and subsidiary services.

Much has been heard lately of plans of the Trans-Canada Air Lines to move its overhaul base to Montreal when the present Viscounts are replaced by jets. It is with hopeful anticipation that the people of Winnipeg and, indeed, of the Prairie West, will await the setting up of a proposed committee of consultants to review the TCA proposal. If public hearings take place experts form the west will no doubt be heard.

Canadians of Icelandic descent in Winnipeg and elsewhere are deeply concerned about the proposed transfer, not only because of the loss of fellow Winnipeg citizens but also because it will diminish the potential of Winnipeg as an effective international airport. But whether the transfer takes place or not, they are most anxious that Winnipeg be, and continue to be, actively an international airport so that airlines such as Loftleiðir can stop at the Winnipeg Airport with full privileges.

If and when that happens and there are scheduled weekly or even more numerous flights between Winnipeg and Reykjavík, or internationally via Winnipeg and Iceland, then dreams will come true and for a cultural purpose the Atlantic will have been spanned.

W. J. Lindal

## ICELANDIC TAUGHT IN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Excerpts from a report by Skuli G. Bjarnason, which appeared in Logberg-Heimskringla, February 14, 1963.

Instruction in Icelandic language and literature has been maintained in the University of California, Los Angeles for twenty five years. This spring a quarter century celebration of the event will be staged with due pomp and solemnity.

In 1938 Dr. Eric Wahlgren, of Swedish descent was asked to give instruction in Old Norse at the Los Angeles Division of the University of California, (U.C.L.A.) Since that time he has taught Old Icelandic. For the last 25 years graduate students have come to Dr. Wahlgren for instruction in Old Norse, or Old Icelandic, as one of the subjects leading to Doctor of Philosophy degree. This last year 97 Ph.D. and other senior students have themselves given instruction in English on Icelandic language and literature.

Professor Wahlgren knows and reads both Old and Modern Icelandic but hesitates to converse in Icelandic, largely because of lack of opportunities for practice. But one of his assistants Dr. Kenneth G. Chapman speaks Icelandic

One of Dr. Wahlgrens hopes is to be able to engage an Icelandic professor to teach Icelandic as it is spoken at the present time.



# ARNHEIDUR EYOLFSON

—W. Kristjanson

With the death of Mrs. Arnheidur (Addie) Eyolfson, May 15, 1962, the Icelandic Canadian lost a valued member of the Editorial Board.

Mrs. Eyolfson was born, December 22, 1904, at Otto, Manitoba, where her parents, Guttormur and Jensina Guttormsson, then resided, but her longtime home was at Riverton, Man. and in Winnipeg. She received her public and high school education in Riverton.

She was married, in 1927, to Fridrik Frank Eyolfson, of Riverton, who predeceased her in 1950.

Mrs. Eyolfson was telephone operator at Riverton for upwards of twenty-five years and postmistress for some years. In this period she was local reporter for the **Winnipeg Free Press** and for the **Lake Winnipeg Argus,** a weekly paper published at Selkirk but serving an area in the Inter-Lake District. Her despatches were noted for their buoyancy of style and she once received a C.B.W. award for the best news item of the day. This was indicative of the literary heritage of the Guttormsson home.

Mrs. Eyolfson was an active community worker and served as Secretary of the "Bræðrasofnuður" at Riverton and as Superintendent of the Sunday School and a member of the choir.

Recognition came her way when she was chosen **Fjallkona** at the Icelandic Celebration at Hnausa, in 1944, and again at Gimli in 1956.

Mrs. Eyolfson moved to Winnipeg in 1950, with her two sons, Maurice and Dennis. She was employed as telephone operator at the **Winnipeg Tribune** and with the City Hydro. In addition to the responsibility of the home and fulltime employment, she continued to give of her service to her church, the First Lutheran Church, and as a member of the Icelandic Canadian Board.

Arnheidur Eyolfson is remembered by her fellow members of the Board for her personal charm, her warmth and friendliness and ready play of humor, and her innate dignity.

# *The Beothuks of Newfoundland*

**by ALLAN M. FRASER**

**Nancy Shanawadithit**
"the last of the Beothuks" who died in 1829.
From the painting by Helen S. Parsons

This vanishing race which inhabited Newfoundland before the arrival of the white man, and whose last representative died more than one hundred and twenty-five years ago, is one of the enigmas of history. William Epps Cormack, who devoted many years of his life to the study of their customs and language, believed that they were descended from intermarriage between the native Indians of Newfoundland and the Norse colonists who, he claimed, settled there following the visit of Leif Ericson to Labrador and Newfoundland in the year 1,000 A.D. The discovery, last summer, of traces of a Viking settlement at Lance-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland by the distinguished Norwegian scholar, Dr. Helge Ingstad, has caused a revival of interest in Cormack's theory. On the other hand, a distinguished nineteenth century ethnologist, Albert S. Gatschet, who made a profound study of the Beothuk language, came to the conclusion that they were "sui generis, a people of themselves, apart and distinct from all others we know anything of." This opinion was shared by the late James P. Howley, the foremost Newfoundland authority on the Beothuks, whose treatise, **The Beothuks or Red Indians** (Cambridge University Press, 1915) is a veritable storehouse of information. A modern investigator, Mr. Harold Horwood, of St. John's, however, has recently put forward the novel theory that the Beothuks were descended from the ancient Egyptians and has adduced strong evidence from the religious beliefs and burial customs of the Beothuks to support this view.

Whatever their origin may have been, their isolated existence in Newfoundland caused the Beothuks to develop a distinctive language of their own and habits and customs different from those of the Indians of the North American Mainland. According to John Guv, who founded the first English colony in Newfoundland at Cupid's in 1610 and who went out of his way to establish friendly relations with the Beothuks, they were of average height, strong and lithe of body, with light brown skin and dark eyes and hair. Guy's description of their physical appearance is confirmed by Lieutenant David Buchan, R.N., who, as we shall see, had ample opportunity to observe a group of them at close quarters. His account is as follow:

"Report has famed these Indians as being of gigantic stature, this is not the case and must have been imagined from the bulkiness of their dress and partly from misrepresentation. They are well formed and appear extremely healthy and athletic, and of the medium structure, probably from five feet eight to five feet nine inches, and with one exception, black hair. Their features are more prominent than any of the Indian tribes that I have seen, and from what could be discovered through a lacker (lacquer) of oil and red ochre (or red earth) with which they besmear themselves, I was led to conclude them fairer than the generality of Indian complexion" (quoted in Howley, J. P., **The Beothuks,** p. 259).

The dress of the Beothuks differed from the costume of other Indian tribes. Their chief garment was a kind of mantle made out of two deer skins sewed together and was nearly square in shape. It had neither sleeves nor buttons and was worn thrown over the shoulders with the corners doubled over at the chest and arms. When the Beothuk warrior made ready to use his bow, he threw off the upper part of the mantle from his shoulders, so as to leave his arms free, and fastened it around his waist much as the Scottish Highlanders used to do with their plaids. The Beothuk mantle frequently had a fringed border and was often decorated with bone pendants. A large collar, of alternate strips of otter and deer skins, was sometimes attached to the mantle and could be used as a hood to protect the face and head in cold or wet weather. In summer, the Beothuks often went barefoot, but in winter their feet were shod in deerskin moccasins and they occasionally wore leggings and arm coverings of the same material. In their hair, which they wore long and plaited at the back of the head, they stuck feathers, one of which was usually pointed straight upward.

Their principal habitat in later years was the drainage basin of the Exploits River and the shores of Notre Dame Bay and White Bay, but traces of them have been found in the Avalon Peninsula and at a few scattered sites on the south and west coasts. They were a simple people living by hunting and fishing. In summer they frequented the coasts and in winter they retired to their wigwams in the interior. These they called "mamateeks". Some of them were circular in shape while others were rectangular.

The Beothuks never mastered the use of firearms. Their deadliest weapon was the bow and arrow. The latter was a clothyard shaft and the arrowhead was originally of stone or bone; later, however, they tipped their arrows with iron made out of articles stolen from the whites. Their spears were of two kinds: one an ingeniously designed harpoon, about fourteen feet in length, used mainly for killing seals and whales: the other, about twelve feet long, for hunting deer.

The Beothuks showed marked ingenuity in their deer-hunting methods. They built deer fences made of trees felled in such a way as to form an impassable barrier extending sometimes for as far as forty miles. The purpose of these fences was to divert the caribou in their annual migration and force them toward the rivers, particularly the Exploits, where it was comparatively easy to slaughter them. The canoe was an indispensable part of the

equipment of the Beothuk hunter and was used both on the river and in coastal waters. The typical Beothuk canoe was from sixteen to twenty-two feet long; it was made of birch lath covered with deerskins, sewed together and fastened by stitching the edges of the skins around the gunwale. The main points of difference between it and the canoes of other Indian tribes were that the Beothuk canoe had a keel and that its crew used stones as ballast.

They had no metal implements. All their tools were of stone and included axes, chisels, gouges, knives and scrapers. Their domestic utensils were of soapstone and were crudely made. Their is no evidence that the Beothuks ever mastered the art of pottery manufacture.

We have little detailed knowledge of their religious beliefs. Such evidence as there is, however, suggests that they were sun-worshippers, the only ones in the vast territory that we now call Canada. Their principal deity, Kuis, the sovereign ruler of the sky, appears to have been a sun-god corresponding to the Egyptian Ra. Their ceremonial sun staves resembled those used by the priests of Heliopolis. The Beothuks burial customs, too, recall those of ancient Egypt, e.g. their practice of painting the corpse with red ochre, their placing of model ships of the dead in the grave, their frequent use of rock tombs for interment and the fact that they sometimes buried their dead in a sitting posture. It is Mr. Horwood's contention that these parallels are so close and so numerous as to be more than mere coincidence and to argue a kinship between the two peoples.

Encounters between the Beothuks and the white settlers were frequent and were destined to prove fatal to the aborigines. The first authenticated meeting of white man and Beothuk, however, was friendly. John Guy, the founder of Cupids, happened upon a party of Beothuks at the head of Trinity Bay in 1612. He exchanged gifts with them and promised to return next year to barter goods. Unfortunately, when the Beothuks reached the rendezvous, they were met, not by Guy, but by a shipping captain, who, unaware of Guy's visit the previous year and fearing an attack by the Beothuks, opened fire on them. Disgusted by what they not unnaturally took to be treachery on Guy's part, the Beothuks came to regard all white men as their deadly enemies and began reprisals.

The first known victims of their vengeance were an unsuspecting party of French fishermen at St. Julien, sixteen of whom were slaughtered. Disguising themselves in the dead men's cloths, the Beothuk raiders fell upon a neighbouring French settlement the following day and massacred twenty-one of its inhabitants. These were exceptional episodes, however; usually the Beothuk forays were much less sanguinary affairs, the chief object of which was to steal tools and equipment, such as sails, fishing lines, knives and hatchets. These thefts infuriated the settlers, who proceeded to hunt the natives down as if they were wild animals. Thus began the systematic extermination of this ill-fated people.

The Beothuks were the prey not only of the white men but of the Micmac Indians, a semi-savage tribe which crossed from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland in the 17th century. The French, eager to avenge the massacre at St. Julien, armed the Micmacs with firelocks and offered a reward for every Beothuk scalp brought in. This led to open warfare between the two tribes, in which the Beothuk bow was no match for the Micmac musket.



The ruthless cruelty of the white settlers in time aroused the indignant intervention of the British government. Following an unsuccessful attempt by Lieutenant John Cartwright, R.N., to make contact with the Beothuks in 1768, Governor Byron in 1769 issued a proclamation ordering the local magistrates to arrest any person suspected of murdering a Beothuk so that the accused could be tried according to the laws of England. Similar proclamations were made by Governor Duff in 1775 and by Governor Montague in 1776. The difficulty, however, was to get in touch with the suspicious natives, as they hid themselves in the forests at the approach of the dreaded white man.

In 1810, a determined attempt was made to establish friendly relations with the Beothuks. It began most promisingly but ended in disaster. Lieutenant David Buchan, R.N., led a well-organized expedition which came upon a settlement of some seventy-five Beothuks on the Exploits river on 24th January, 1811. He appeared to have won their trust by means of gifts and conciliatory gestures and, having signified his intention to return next day with more presents, he departed for his camp a few miles distant, taking four hostages with him and leaving two of his marines in the Beothuk village. Three of his hostages fled and, when Buchan returned to the settlement the following day, his worst fears were conformed—the Beothuks had vanished, the village was deserted and his two men had been killed by arrows and then beheaded, a fate commonly meted out to their enemies by the Beothuks. Buchan himself attributed the hostile action to a false report brought back to the village by one of the escaped hostages, but it may well have been due to Beothuk suspicion of their inveterate foes, the white furriers, several of whom accompanied Buchan as guides.

Discouraged by Buchan's ill-fated expedition, the British authorities made no further attempt at reconciliation for several years, apart from a proclamation issued by Governor Keats in 1813, offering a reward of 100 pounds to any person establishing peaceful intercourse with the Beothuks and threatening with severe penalties anyone ill-treating them.

Despite this well-intentioned proclamation, one of the most tragic incidents in the sad story of the Beothuks occurred in 1819, when a Beothuk was killed while trying to rescue his wife, Demasduit, from a party of white men led by John Peyton, a prominent merchant of Twillingate. This episode was the result of an expedition undertaken by Peyton with the approval of Governor Sir Charles Hamilton, who authorized him to search for property stolen from his premises by the Beothuks and, if possible, to bring back one of them alive.

Demasduit, re-named Mary March (because she had been captured in the month of March) was taken to Twillingate and afterwards to St. Johns's where she responded so happily to kindly treatment that a plan was formed to restore her to her people in the hope that she might become an ambassadress of goodwill. Buchan, now a captain, was commissioned to execute the plan but, unfortunately, Mary March died of tuberculosis aboard his ship at Botwood before contact could be made with the Beothuks. Undeterred, Buchan placed her body in a coffin which he carried up the Exploits river in the hope of meeting up with some of her people. Having failed to do so, he left the coffin, together with a number of gifts, at the spot where

she had been captured the previous year. The coffin was subsequently found by the Beothuks, but no reconciliation resulted.

The last in the series of encounters between the white men and the Beothuks had its brighter aspects. It occurred in 1823 when two hunters from Twillingate captured two nieces of Demasduit's husband and their mother. The three women were taken to St. John's where they were well treated for several weeks before being brought back to Exploits laden with gifts for their fellow-tribesmen. Unable to make contact with their own people, they returned to Twillingate where the mother and one of her daughters died soon afterwards. The surviving daughter, Shanawdithit, renamed Nancy, was taken into the Peyton household where she lived contentedly for the next five years.

Meanwhile, in 1827, the Beothuks Institute had been founded in St. John's, with the two-fold purpose of establishing communication with th Beothuks and civilizing them. Its leading spirit was William Epps Cormack, the first white man to cross Newfoundland, who had made two journeys into the interior in unsuccessful attempts to find traces of the Beothuks. The first task undertaken by the new organanization was to take care of Shanawdithit, who was brought back to St. John's and was placed for several months in Cormack's household. She had picked up some knowledge of the English language and, with her help, Cormack was able to compile a limited Beothuk vocabulary. She also gave him considerable information about the habits and customs of her people. Sh had a remarkable artistic talent and, while in Cormack's household, she drew ten pictures illustrating the last years in the tragic history of her people. Five of them depict scenes in the vicinity of Red Indian Lake and the Exploits river in the period 1810-1823; these include descriptions of Buchan's two expeditions. The others are drawings of wigwams, storehouses, domestic utensils and religious symbols. In conversation with Cormack she told of the rapid decline in the number of her people, stating that there were only thirteen of them left in 1823. The wretched remnant of the tribe were seen by trappers in the winter of that year crossing the ice at New Bay in Notre Dame Bay. This is the last recorded account of them; certainly the indefatigable Cormack found no trace of them in 1827. Two years later, on 6th June, 1829, Shanawdithit herself died, the last of her race.

—Courtesy of the
**Canadian Geographical Journal**

# Were The Beothuks Part Icelandic?

**by W. KRISTJANSON**

Were the Beothuks of Newfoundland part Icelandic?

The discovery last summer of what may well be the site of a former Nordic post or settlement at Lance-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland has caused a revival of interest in theories regarding the origin of the Beothuks of Newfoundland. Some think that this now extinct people may



have been descended from inter-marriages between the native Indians of Newfoundland and people of Icelandic stock from Greenland.[1] Others believe that they were a people "apart and distinct from all others we know anything of".[2] One theory advanced is that they were descended from the ancient Egyptians.[3] Articles on the Beothuks and other natives—Indian and Eskimo—of the Newfoundland-Labrador region have appeared in previous issues of the **Icelandic Canadian** [4] and the time seems opportune to attempt to sort out facts and opinions expressed there and in other readily available sources that have a bearing on the question, "Were the Beothuks of Newfoundland part Icelandic?

Supporters of the affirmative point to the fact that the Beothuks were racially different from the Indians and Eskimos, that their skin was light, and that they wore a European type garment. "Why would not the Greenlanders abandon an austere land for a much more congenial land?" has been asked. The case for the affirmative is buttressed by the fact that the Greenlanders maintained contact with Leif Ericson's Markland long after the Vinland discovery. Markland was to the north of Vinland.

That the Greenlanders maintained contact with Markland for a long time is an established fact. A Greenland ship that had been to Markland arrived in Iceland in 1347. The Icelandic annals state:

"There arrived a ship from Greenland which was smaller than the smallest type of Icelandic mercantile craft. It . . . was without anchor. There were seventeen aboard. The ship had been to Markland. It was later driven here (to Iceland) by a gale."[5]

Greenlanders **could** have settled permanently in America in the Middle Ages. Dr. Ingstad's recent discoveries lend color to this view, but, just as one swallow does not make a summer, so the ruins of one cluster of buildings discovered so far, do not prove the case.

Be that as it may, the strongest indication of a possible Nordic strain in the Beothuks was the color of their skin and the color of the hair of some of these people. Several sources agree that their skin was light, or light brown[6]; white when young, although they grew weatherbeaten and dark in color with age. As for their hair, Master John Guy, writing in 1611, says that their hair was diverse, some black, some brown, some yellow".[7] However, the great majority appear to have had black hair. Those that Lieutenant David Buchan[3] saw had black hair, with one exception, and De Laet[9] says, in 1613, that their hair was black.

Colston[10], in 1613 describes them as being beardless, broad-faced, and full-eyed. De Laet says that their faces were broad, the nose flat, and the eyes large. These do not suggest Icelandic traits.

William Epps Cormack, founder of the Beothuk Institute, points out the possible origin of the Beothuk language and said it possessed all the European sounds[11], but other students deny that it resembles the Icelandic. Gatschet[12] believed that theirs was an independent language. Jenness[13] says that some meagre vocabularies of their language suggest that they spoke two or three dialects but that they were of a common tongue. The following few examples most decidedly do not suggest relationship to the Icelandic. **Kuis** was the name of the principal Beothuk deity. **Demasduit** and **Shanawdithit** were the names of two Beothuk women, and **mamateek** was their word

for wigwam. **Beothuk** meant probably "man" or "human being".

Clothes do not make a man and clothes do not prove the relationship of the Beothuks and the Icelandic people, but for what this is worth, the Beothuks[11] wore a short gown or cassock made of stag skins, the fur innermost, that came down to the middle of the leg, with sleeves to the middle of the arm, and a bearskin about the neck".[14] Another source[15] says that the mantle had neither sleeves nor buttons and that a large collar, of alternate strips of otter and deer skins, was sometimes attached to the mantle and could be used as a hood. The hood could have been patterned on the Eskimo parka hood, for there was contact between the Beothuks and the Labrador Eskimo, and a mantle whose upper folds could be thrown off the shoulder when the bow was brought into plav need not be associated exclusively with Nordic people.

The Beothuk utensils and implements have been described. "The scanty material culture was characterized bv the use of wood for household utensils; stone implements were well made; snowshoes were of a peculiar type[16]. They did not make pottery but cooked their food in vessels of birch bark. They speared seals with harpoons modelled on the archaic Eskimo type[17]. In these two sources there is nothing to associate with the Greenlanders' use of iron and other metals. There is nothing to associate with the Dr. Ingstad excavation which yielded a smithy, an iron anvil, and hundreds of pieces of bog iron.

Nordic influence, if any, might be expected in weapons and boats. In war, the Beothuks used bows and arrows, spears, dart, clubs, and slings[18]. There were no metal parts. The Beothuk canoes were made of birch bark like those of the eastern tribes, but they were peculiar in shape, each gunwale presenting the outline of a pair of crescent moons[19]. Norse sea-faring ships were high in the prow, but their boats did not present the outline of a pair of crescent moons.

The Beothuk dwellings were not of a European type. "They dwell in certain conical lodges and low huts of sticks set in a circle and joined together at the roof."[20] Their wigwams were of birch bark.

They used steam baths in huts covered with skins and heated with hot stones.[21] While this may suggest the steam bath of Snorri Sturluson, it suggests rather the Finnish type of steam bath.

The Beothuk religion, as Fraser points out, is not known in detail, but such evidence as there is suggests sun worshippers. Leyton declares that the sun was the chief object of their worship[22]. Many of their graves contained bone ornaments of curious shapes and etched with strange designs.[23] Christianity was introduced in the Icelandic settlement in Greenland in the year 1,000 A.D., and it continued to be under the jurisdiction of Rome until the fifteenth century.

The Beothuks were few in number, says Richard Whitbourne, in 1583, and the entire tribe could not have numbered more than five hundred individuals when Cabot discovered Newfoundland in 1497.[24]

The weight of evidence indicates that this small group was a people apart, not related to the Indians and Eksimos, and at the most with a small admixture of European blood. The one significant indication of a Nordic strain is that some of the Beothuks had brown or yellow hair. This could be explained by limited contact with Nordic peoples.



If such limited contact there was, it was not sufficient for a Nordic impress on the Beothuk people as a whole, in the matter of language, religion, customs and manners, dwellings, weapons, and tools and impelments.

What might be the occasion or the nature of this contact? First and foremost, there is the possibility of logging stations in Newfoundland. Then, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the people of the western Greenland settlement had turned to native ways of life and some of these people might have drifted south-west and south. Stefansson discovered blond Eskimos in the Canadian Arctic. Thorfinn Karlsefni, in his expedition to Vinland, about 1003 A.D. found the keel of a ship on **Wonderstrands.** Shipwrecks might be the answer. Legend has it that an Icelandic saga hero, **Bjorn Breidvikingakappi,** took up his abode in a country far to the southwest of Ireland. Other Europeans could have made their homes on the east coast of America. The Paul Knutsson expedition from Norway, in 1355, indicates the possibility of people from Greenland moving to America. The Aztec Indian god, Quetzalcoatl, is in some accounts described as white and bearded.[25]

What then, was the origin of the Beothuk people? The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this article, but it may be noted here that the Beothuk culture resembles in a few points the Dorset Eskimo culture.[26] Before the Thule Eskimos of today moved eastward into Canada and Greenland, some seven or eight hundred years ago, these regions had been occupied for centuries by another group of Eskimos, the Dorset people.[27] Perhaps, far back in time, the ancestors of the Beothuks moved eastward across northern Asia and northern Canada. The Basques are a racial fragment unrelated to the surrounding populace. There could be a parallel in the Beothuks. Be that as it may, our question has been: "Were the Beothuks of Newfoundland part Icelandic?" The answer has been suggested above. There could have been a slight admixture, but only a slight admixture of Icelandic blood in the Beothuks.

**(THE BEOTHUKS)**

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# Sgt. Kolskeggur Thorsteinson

Service in two world wars by five brothers in a family of ten children that emigrated from Iceland to Canada more than 60 years ago was recalled by the death in January at the age of 72 of Kolskeggur Thorsteinson at his home in the city of St. James in Manitoba.

He was one of six sons and four daughters of the late Mr. and Mrs. Tomas Thorsteinson. The family came to Canada in 1902 when Kolskeggur was 13 and settled in St. James, a suburb of Winnipeg. Here the children grew up and received their education.

Mr. Thorsteinson and three of his brothers served with the Canadian army in France and Belgium during the First World War, each for lengthy periods at the front.

Hjortur Harry), the second oldest, was killed in action at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in the spring of 1917. Daniel, third oldest and now living in Winnipeg, was wounded at Passchendaele early in 1917. The third brother, Tryggvi, was wounded at Hooge, Belgium, in the summer of 1916. After the war he chose to make his home in Britain where he still lives.

Mr. Thorsteinson himself enlisted on the day war broke out, August 4, 1914, in the 8th Overseas Battalion, Royal Winnipeg Rifles (Little Black Devils) and went to England and France with the unit in 1915. He was wounded at the Battle of Ypres that year and again in 1916. He spent 18 months in the front line and rose to the rank of corporal.

Invalided back to Canada in the fall of 1916 he then joined the 223rd Overseas Battalion, Canadian Scandinavians, rose to the rank of sergeant and went to England with that unit in the spring of 1917.

In the summer of 1918 he transferred to proceed with the Canadian Expeditionary Force to North Russia through the port of Murmansk. There he served for one year with the rank of sergeant and was mentioned in despatches for carrying ammunition up to the front line under heavy fire. Returning home he was discharged in October, 1919.

During the Second World War Mr. Thorsteinson served with the Veterans' Guard of Canada, enlisting in the summer of 1943. A fourth and younger brother, Orn (Ernie) who now lives in Winnipeg, served overseas with the Royal Canadian Artillery for more than three years.

Other members of the family are sisters Mrs. Laura Barber and Mrs. Thora Badger of Winnipeg and Miss Sina and Mrs. Sigga Jorgenson in New York City, N. Y., and brother Joseph who lives in Ottawa, Ont. Surviving Kolskeggur is his wife, the former Sigurlaug Gilbert, and daughters Mrs. Thelma Sanders of St. James and Mrs. Connie Conquergood of Neepawa, Man.

Mr. Thorsteinson was a builder by trade and over the years built numerous homes in the Greater Winnipeg area. He was a member of St. James branch, Royal Canadian Legion, and of the 8th Battalion Association. He was holder of the General Service Medal and Victory Medal of the First World War and of the General Service Medal of the Second World War.

—Steini Thorsteinson


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**Renee Joanne Letourneau**

**Renee Joanne Letourneau,** daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Letourneau of Plenty, Sask. was awarded two scholarships in 1962 for scholastic achievement.

Joanne who is eighteen years old, graduated from Northwest Central High School at Plenty, Sask. where she also received her Public School education. She was Valedictorian of her class in June 1962, Editor of their Year Book, and active in most of the school activities. She also contributed to her community as member of the senior choir in the Plenty United Church and acted as organist for their Sunday School. She was also an active member of the C.G.I.T.

The scholarships included a Saskatchewan Government scholarship for $500.00, with an average of 87 in final departmental exams, $100.00 scholarship from the St. Luke's Lodge, A.F. and A. M. at Plenty. She is now enrolled in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Joanne's mother is the former Guðbjorg Sigridur Olafsson daughter of John and Sigridur Olafsson (both deceased) of Leslie, Sask. Both grandparents were born and brought up in Iceland, John, in Borgarfjardarsyslu, and Sigridur in Hvitarsidu.

**Albertina G. Johnson,**
Blaine, Wash.

# An Address On Iceland's Economy

delivered by **Consul Grettir L. Johannson**
at a meeting of The Icelandic Canadian Club, October 1962

Mr. Chairman:
Ladies and **Gentlemen:**

This being a second of a series of lectures on various topics concerning Iceland being given at meetings of The Icelandic Canadian Club during 1962-3, we are tonight deeply indebted to Professor Olafur Björnsson, head of the Department of Economics, University of Iceland, in Reykjavík.

Our president, Bob Swanson, was the intermediary through whom the lecture of the evening was obtained, and he in turn has asked me to present Professor Björnsson's paper. This I am pleased to do, but, before I do so, I would like to give a short biographical sketch of the author, supplied by Prof. Bessason.

Olafur Björnsson was born the 2nd of February, 1912, at Hjarðarholti í Dölum, son of Reverend Björn Stefánsson, later pastor at Auðkúlu in Húnavatnssýsla. (Björn was the son of Rev. Stefán at Auðkúla and a brother of Hilmar Stefánsson former bank manager of The Rural Bank of Iceland, and of Rev. Eiríkur Stefánsson.)

Olafur graduated from the Menntaskóli in Akureyri in 1931. The last year of studies at that school he skipped a grade and obtained, nevertheless, a very high standing in the final examinations. He studied law at the University of Iceland during 1931-32, and upon completion turned to studying economics at the University of Copenhagen from which he graduated with a degree in economics in 1938. Shortly after his return to his homeland he took positions with the Statistical Bureau of Iceland and the National Library, and in 1940 he became a teacher and later professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Iceland, and is so now.

Olafur has taken an active part in political life; was for a time an alternate in the City Council of Reykjavík, and for a time was a Conservative member of Althing.

Professor Björnsson has written a large number of articles on economic subjects in newspapers and periodicals; and has published a book on economics. He has often been consulted by the government of the day on complex economic matters, and is considered the most gifted and erudite economist in Iceland.

Professor Björnsson's lecture follows.

## SOME FACTS ON ICELAND'S ECONOMY

For a foreigner visiting Iceland and coming from a country with more favorable climatic conditions, it may be a puzzle to explain to himself how people in this dreary island make their livelihood. It is the aim of my lecture to try to solve this riddle as far as can be done within the short time alloted to me.

We shall begin with a short histor-



ical survey of the economic development of Iceland. Up to the beginning of this century, farming was the chief occupation of the Icelanders. In former times it constituted, so to say, their only means of livelihood, besides the fisheries, which until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were only of secondary importance. The preponderance of farming as a means of livelihood in Iceland until the latest times, must be explained by the fact, that before the technical development of the two last centuries, Iceland had no other opportunities to offer its people.

Because of climatic conditions, farming in Iceland is practically limited to the raising of livestock, and hay is the only crop of importance. The low temperature during summer times limits severelv the possibilities of growing cereals, only barley and oats can be ripened and only in more favourably located places. There was some cultivation of cereals in the first centuries after the Norse colonization of Iceland, but in the sixteenth century this was wholly abandoned, probably because imported cereals had become cheaper. It may also have been caused by deteriorating conditions. In recent years some cultivation of barley and oats has again taken place, but as yet it is of no importance for Icelandic farming.

Besides haymaking, potatoes are the most important crop in Iceland and when weather conditions are favourable, the potato crop is sufficient to meet domestic needs, but, especially in the northern part of the country, the crop may fail because of early frosts.

Raising of livestock based on cultivation of grass is, and has been, by far the most important branch of farming. The most important livestock is dairy cattle and sheep. The relatively vast grasslands create favourable conditions for sheep raising, and the mild winters allow the grazing of sheep most of the year. The cattle, on the other hand, can only be grazed for 3—4 months but haymaking on cultivated land forms the base for foddering the cattle.

There are relatively many horses in Iceland and for centuries they have been of great importance as the only means of communication, as roads were wholly absent, but in later years horses have not been so important as formerly, and their number has decreased considerably during the last seventy years.

Throughout the centuries, farming was the dominant occupation of the Icelandic people and the techniques used remained almost unchanged since the time of colonization. The methods of production were very primitive and productivity was low. The general standard of living was at a subsistence level, and if successive years came with bad harvest, either because of bad weather conditions or volcanic eruptions, many people suffered hunger.

As far as the population trend can be estimated during the centuries from the time of settlement up to the nineteenth century, population has been nearly stationary during that period. If succession of good years came the population increased rather rapidly, but when bad years followed the population shrunk as many died from hunger and disease. The first census was taken in Iceland in 1703. Then the population of the whole country amounted to about 50 thousand. A century later, or in 1801, the population was 47 thousand, so that it had declined a little during the 18th century. The population decline of

the 18th century had two main causes. Firstly, the great small-pox epidemic that swept the country during 1707–09, which was considered to have carried away 18 thousand people, or about one third of the population. Another catastrophe happened late in that century, or in 1783–84, when the most dreadful eruption and earthquakes in the history of the country took place, which also caused enormous losses of life and property.

Throughout the nineteenth century the population rose from 47 thousand to 78 thousand. The population increase during that century was not even, as there was a considerable population decline during the eighties, when a succession of bad years occurred, which caused the migration of many thousands of Icelanders to North America.

As I have already pointed out the fisheries had only secondary importance as an occupation in Iceland up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But ever since the colonization fisheries have played some part in the country's economy, especially for export. Already as early as in the latter part of the thirteenth century possibilities opened up for a profitable sale of stockfish on the European continent, and stockfish became a staple article of export from Iceland. The stockfish market remained firm and profitable up to about 1600, but then it began declining, and the sale of this commodity became increasingly difficult, with a consequent decrease in the fishing trade, but yet stockfish continued to be an important article of export down to about 1870. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Icelandic fishing fleet consisted almost exclusively of rowing boats. Fishing could not be considered as an independent occupation as relatively few of the inhabitants lived exclusively by it. Fishing was done by those farmers who had an easy access to the coast, as a secondary occupation.

Productivity in the fisheries at that time was very low, because of the primitive fishing boats and methods used, but for centuries fish products have been the chief export products of the country.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the number of decked vessels engaged in fishing began to increase rapidly, and the number of rowing boats used for that purpose declined. The change from open rowing boats to decked vessels caused a great increase in the productivity of the fisheries and also greater security for the fishermen.

In the beginning of this century, the first trawlers to be operated by Icelanders arrived in the country. At the same time the first Icelandic vessels were equipped with engines, nothing but sails having been used before. These technical changes were of great importance and their introduction meant the beginning of the industrial era in Iceland. Since that time a profound change has taken place in the structure of the Icelandic economy. This change is shortly described in the following.

One of the most remarkable features of the development that has taken place since what I have called the beginning of the industrial era, is the relatively rapid population increase in this country. Since the beginning of this century, the population has increased from 78 thousand inhabitants to 180 thousand, or more than 100%. The cause of this is not a higher birth rate, (which is not higher than at the beginning of the period), but lower mortality, especially lower infant mor-



tality, which was enormous in Iceland until the end of the nineteenth century, but now Iceland figures amongst those countries of the world that have the lowest infant mortality rate.

Another important feature of the general economic development in Iceland is the urbanization that has taken place since the beginning of this century. In 1901, the biggest town of the country was Reykjavík, with only 7000 inhabitants. There were two or three other places with between 1–2000 inhabitants but otherwise the whole population was living in the rural districts or small villages adjacent to the sea. By the census of 1960, the capital, Reykjavík, had 72 thousand inhabitants, other towns had 47 thousand inhabitants, villages with more than 300 inhabitants 23 thousand inhabitants and the rural districts and villages with less than 300 inhabitants only 35 thousand or about 20% of the whole population.

Along with these changes, a great change has occurred in the occupational distribution in the country since the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1880, 73 per cent of the entire population was engaged in farming, but in 1950 the corresponding number was only 20 per cent, and is probably still less now. Although it may seem surprising, the percentage of the population engaged in fisheries has declined a little between 1880 and 1950 or from 12 to 11 per cent. But the main reason for this is the technical development of the fishing industry. Although the catch has increased enormously, both as to quantity and value, relatively fewer persons are now engaged in the catching than when more primitive methods were used. It should also be pointed out that in 1880 persons engaged in the curing of fish were counted as being occupied in the fisheries, while later occupational censuses counted them in manufacturing.

The occupations on the other hand that have had the greatest increase during this period are manufacturing, industry, commerce and communications and public and personal services. In 1880 only 2 per cent of the population were engaged in manufacturing but 33 per cent in 1950. In 1880 only 4 per cent of the population was engaged in commerce and communications but 18 per cent in 1950. In the same period the percentage of those engaged in public and personal services increased from 3 to 12 per cent.

As already mentioned both the changes in occupational distribution and the migration from the rural districts to the towns and villages are based on the technological progress within the fisheries that began in the latter half of the nineteenth century but was very much enhanced by the introduction of the trawlers and other vessels equipped with engines in the beginning of this century.

Until that time the Icelanders had to earn their livelihood from primitive farming, where productivity was low as the unfavourable climatic conditions severely limit the possibilities of rural husbandry. But the development of the fisheries, and later the fish processing industry, made it possible for the Icelanders to utilize the rich fishing grounds around the Icelandic coast, which for the time being must be considered the most valuable resources of the country. This development made it possible for the Icelandic people to participate in the international division of labour and enjoy the resulting benefits.

The Icelandic fisheries are mainly of two kinds, cod fisheries and herring fisheries. The former until recently, were of pre-eminent importance. But after 1930 the economic importance of the herring fisheries increased greatly, and in the last years before the Second World War the herring fisheries were nearly as important as the cod fisheries. During the war the relative importance of the herring fisheries declined again, as there were difficulties about marketing the herring products during war time. After the war there came a period of more than 10 years when the herring catch failed almost completely. Over the last 5—6 years the herring catch has again recovered, probably because of more efficient catching methods.

The increase in productivity in the fisheries can be estimated from the fact that since the beginning of this century the catch has increased in quantity about 15 times although the absolute number of fishermen has during the same period declined about 40 per cent.

What makes the fisheries and their development so important to Icelanders is the fact that they are practically the sole exporting industry of the country. Since 1940 the share of fisheries in the export of the country has been 90 per cent or more. This percentage has been increasing since the beginning of the century, when it amounted to only 59 per cent.

As previously mentioned, up to the nineteenth century the fish was mainly prepared for export as stockfish. During that century the export of salted fish was increasing, and from the beginning of this century up to the outbreak of the Second World War 70—80 per cent or more of the value of exported fish products was represented by saltfish, cured or uncured.

The outbreak of the Second World War brought about a great change in the marketing of Icelandic fish products. All the European markets were closed except the British, where great possibilities of selling codfish at good prices developed. In 1944, 73 per cent of the catch was exported as iced fish, 23 per cent processed by the freezing plants and only 1.5 per cent was salted. After the war the preparation of salted fish again increased although it has never since become nearly as important as before the war.

Since the Second World War frozen fish has been by far the most important single item in Icelandic export, both in quantity and value. The first quick-freezing plant was built in Iceland in 1930, but it was not until five years later that steps were taken, on government initiative, to make the quick-freezing of fish an important branch of industry. During the war there was great progress, and freezing plants increased in number, size and working capacity. Since the end of the war the number of the plants has not increased to any extent, but there has been great progress concerning size and working capacity.

Some few years before the war, drying stockfish for foreign markets was resumed on a small scale. In the last decade this preparation of the fish for export has been of growing importance. Thus in 1960 about 11% of the catch was dried as stockfish.

The first fish meal factory was erected during the First World War, and at the end of the Second World War, there were 12 such factories, most of them built between 1930 and 1940. Since the war the production of fish meal has increased considerably; now there are about 40 such factories, and besides, some of the newer Icelandic



trawlers are equipped for making fishmeal on board. In 1961, the value of the fish meal, herring meal included, amounted to nearly 12 per cent of the total value of the production. This production is hence relatively important, but rather risky, as the value of the fishmeal varies very considerably from year to year. Cod-liver oil was up to the end of the Second World War, one of our most important products. But during the last 10 years demand for it has been declining, as synthetic products have replaced cod liver oil as a source of vitamin-products.

The most important products of the herring fisheries are salted herring, herring oil and meal. Up to 1930 nearly the whole herring catch was salted, but in the 1930's the herring meal and oil industry developed rapidly, because of a great demand in the World Market.

In 1961, the value of exported herring products was 734 mill. kronur, or about 25 per cent of the total export value. The most valuable single item in that export was salted herring, the value of which amounted to 326 mill. kronur but other important items are herring oil and herring meal, that together were of about the same value.

Although farming is, as already mentioned, of much less importance to the Icelandic economy than formerly, great economic progress has taken place in this field, especially since the end of the Second World War.

The two main features in the economic progress of Icelandic farming are, the greater stress on cultivation and the improvement of the techniques used.

In the beginning of this century, most of the haymaking for fodder took place on uncultivated meadows, but today nearly all haymaking takes place on cultivated fields. In the last sixty years the area of cultivated land has increased from 17.000 to about 75.000 Hectares or more than four times. During the same period the hay crop on cultivated land has increased from 50.000 to about 300.000 metric tons yearly. During the same period the number of cattle has increased from 24,000 to 53,000 and the number of sheep from 470.000 to about 830.000.

The output of agricultural products can be estimated to have increased 3 to 4 times during this period although the number of persons engaged in that occupation has dropped by about one third.

The main cause of this increase in agricultural productivity is the growing use of machinery that has taken place especially since the end of the Second World War.

The use of tractors, jeeps, harvesting machines and so on has made it possible to increase the crop considerably both as to quantity and quality with use of much less labour than the prim itive methods, that had prevailed for centuries, could allow.

As mentioned above, manufacturing was almost non-existent in Iceland at the beginning of this century, but since then it has developed so rapidly that when an occupational census was taken in 1950, about one-third of the Icelandic population gained their livelihood from manufacturing.

The development of the fish-processing industry has already been briefly described as this is closely connected to the fisheries. Manufacturing industry based on foreign raw materials has also developed to a considerable extent during the last three decades. This branch of industry developed rather rapidly during the years of the

Great Depression in the decade preceding the Second World War. The import restrictions of this period made manufacture from foreign raw materials for sale in the home market profitable Most of those industries were, as may be expected, on a small scale, and when import restrictions have been removed they have had difficulties in holding their ground against foreign competition.

In the last decades two large scale factories have been constructed on government initiative. One is the fertilizer plant in the neighborhood of Reykjavík which started operating in 1954 with an annual output of 18.000 tons ammonium nitrate. This is a little more than the home consumption, the excess being exported. In 1958 the cement factory of Akranes started with a capacity of 7,500 tons of cement, which is sufficient to satisfy home consumption, and some years some cement has been exported.

The possibilities of economic growth in Iceland seem to be mostly connected with the vast unused resources of water power and the hot springs.

Although electricity has already been brought to about ninety per cent of the Icelandic people, and although Reykjavík and some smaller towns now enjoy the use of thermal heat for the heating of houses, only a very small fraction of the resources available has so far been utilized. For the time being a big hydroelectric power plant at Thjorsá in southern Iceland is planned. The cost of this plant is estimated 1200 million kronur or ten million pounds sterling. Such a power station would make it possible to construct large scale factories using domestic raw materials that could compete in the world market and thus make Iceland less dependent upon the fisheries as the sole export industry.

As both the catch and world market price of fish products fluctuate the Icelandic economy will be vulnerable, so long as it is solely dependent upon fish-products as a source of foreign currency.

Technically, there are also vast possibilities for expansion in the farming occupation as only 4 per cent of the cultivatable area is cultivated. But as world prices of the products of Icelandic agriculture are today, the possibilities of expanding farming for the purpose of export seem rather limited.

As an indication about the standard of living in Iceland compared to other countries, it can be mentioned that in 1960 the average per capita income in Iceland was $857. Seven years before, or in 1953, there were only 3 countries in Europe with higher per capita income, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Outside Europe there were 4 countries enjoying higher per capita income, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is probable, that in the period between 1953 and 1960 some more countries have reached the per capita income of Iceland, but in spite of this Iceland is undoubtedly amongst those countries of the world that enjoy the highest standard of living.



# PALL S. PALSSON

**A Quest, Frustration and Victory**

A characteristic of the Norsemen of old was a yearning—a quest they may not have fully understood themselves. Rurik and Askold consolidated the areas around present Kiev; Rollo became the chief of the Normans; Count Roger of Normandy ruled Sicily: countless Norsemen settled in the Western Islands among the Celtic Westmen: Ingolfur Arnarsson threw the pillars into the sea near Iceland and Revkjavik was founded. Erik the Red pushed on to Greenland; his son, Leifur, discovered Vinland.

A thousand and one years after those pillars drifted ashore in Iceland, Sigtryggur Jónasson led in an other quest and "Nýja-Ísland" was established. Many New-Icelands obviously could not be formed but the same sentiment existed in all the Icelandic settlements. It has prevailed through the years in the hearts of Vestur-Islendingar and has found expression in different forms. A striking illustration is the "bær", the true Icelandic "home"-stead which the late Pall S. Palsson established half a century after he came to Canada.

Pall S. Palsson was born in Iceland, September 17, 1882. In May, 1900, he crossed the Atlantic to Canada. By that time his love of land, gathering strength in his shepherd days in Borgarfjörður, had already become deeply rooted in his heart. Many years later he began to understand two conflicting emotions within—love of his native land and the urge to press on. In 1939 Pall composed a poem for the Icelandic-day Celebration at Hnausa which opens with these graphic lines, writ as if hewn out of granite:

Pall S. Palsson

"Orð fá ei lýst hve við unnum þér heitt,
útþráin fekk ekki hjörtunum breytt."

Very inadequately they may be translated:

"The depth of our love no words can convey;
The urge to explore our hearts could not sway."

Pall Palsson published three books of poems and many of his poems are still in manuscript form. His poetry, as so often is the case, reveals the inner man—kindness, total absence of hauteur, sympathy, tolerance yet unyielding steadfastness in what to him was unchangeable.

The titles tell a story. The first one, "Norður-Reykir", published in 1936, bears the name of the "bær", the farmstead where he grew up. The second, published in 1947, he called "Skilarétt".

That was what took place in the fall when the sheep, that had grazed in the mountains all summer, are claimed by the rightful owners. Childhood memories had not dimmed in spite of an absence of almost half a century.

The title to the last book of poems, published in 1954, summarizes Pall's whole life. He called it "Eftirleit"—a search or yearning. By then Pall had grasped what had taken him to Canada, yet had kept him in Iceland.

The main and lead poem in the book is: "Til konunnar minnar", "To my Wife".

Pall's first victory was the love of Olina (Egilsdottir) Anderson, born at Álfaborg in Borgarfjörður eystri, whom he married in Winnipeg, June 15, 1910. That deep and mutual love was reinforced by common accord on fundamentals in their lives—a passion for their inherited wealth—the grandeur of Iceland's scenery, Icelandic language and literature.

In that central poem Pall reveals both his frustrations and his strength.

In poetic imagery he has his barque, heavily laden with his hopes and aspirations, reach the fishing grounds of abundance—America.

> Á frægu fiskimiði,
> eg fullhlóð bátinn minn".

But a "Byrðingur", a ship of burden, a merchantman swept towards his boat and all was lost—except himself.

> "þar öllum auð var fargað,
> —en ekki sjálfum mér."

But there was more than abiding love for his wife and the inward calm. The second victory was their daughter, Margaret. Pall portrays her entree in these tender lines:

> "Svo fundum við blóm eitt og bárum það heim
> með bænum og gleði."

Margaret married Andrew Douglas Ramsay and they have three children. Pall Douglas, Marlene and Laurene. Pall's love of his grandchildren finds expression in verses he composed annually for a number of years to his grandson. One of the verses closes thus:

> "Það yrði mitt stóra og óbætta tap
> ef ekki eg hönd þinni næði."

Something from within, perhaps that same Eftirleit, prompted Pall, in 1950. to purchase a small dwelling in Gimli. Fate had decreed that what of life remained was to be spent in the west—in Vesturheimi. Why not move to Gimli, the place where the first settlers in Manitoba chose to make their home, named after "Gimlei", the home of the Norse gods. Pall and Lina moved in 1952.

The age-old Icelandic custom of naming farmsteads was re-enacted. They named their home "Álfaborg", the name of the "bær" where Lina grew up.

The year 1954 was truly a year of victory: Pall and Lina visited their homeland. In poetic prose Pall describes his thoughts as he approaches Ieeland.

"Iceland is revealed to you in all its glory. The morning sun adorns both sea and land. The glaciers behold you in silence, shrouded in their snow-white draperies. They welcome you, but unless you have known them you cannot grasp what is within. Inside the cold of the outer garb there is the warmth of the heart. They are royalty in fetters, and await the embrace that will release them. But those fetters are strands of beautiful colors; the maidens fair would not want them otherwise." (from Minningar frá Íslandsferðinni).

Pall S. Palsson died January 6, 1963. For ten years Lina and he were as close as fate would allow to the original Álfaborg—to Iceland.

It was inevitable that his remains should lie in Gimli—not far from the Álfaborg of the West. There, for what of life yet remains, the widow will reside, deriving strength and comfort from the vivid and ever fresh memories.

**W. J. Lindal**



# Icelandic Canadian Club Activities

## THE DINNER AND DANCE

Recognition of the contributions made by two of its members to the city of Winnipeg highlighted the Icelandic Canadian Club's annual dinner and dance this year. Mayor Stephen Juba, who attended the dinner with Mrs. Juba, presented the City of Winnipeg Community Service Award to Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson and Judge W. J. Lindal for "service to the community at large."

Other guests of honor were Hon. Gurney Evans, representing the Manitoba Government, and Mrs. Evans, Mr. Gildas Molgat, Liberal leader of the opposition, and Mrs. Molgat.

Mrs. Heather Ireland, the former Miss Heather Sigurdson, entertained with vocal solos. The club's president, Mr. A. R. Swanson, chaired the dinner with charm and despatch.

Held in the Marlborough Hotel on January 25, the dinner dance was attended by 250 people, a record attendance for the last few years. Music was by Harold Green's orchestra.

★

## THE MIDWINTER CONCERTS

The three-day meeting of the Icelandic National League, held the latter part of February, is now a 44-year-old Winnipeg tradition.

Each day ends in a concert and to many these are the crowning pleasure of the conference. The first is sponsored by Frón, the Winnipeg chapter of the League, the second by the Icelandic Canadian Club. The third combines a brief wind-up of the League's business with an evening of entertainment.

This year, two speakers direct from Iceland touched a magic wand to that special spark in those special people who are drawn to these meetings year after year. They spoke at the first and the last concerts.

With the middle concert, the Icelandic Canadian Club presented an all Canadian program and climaxed the evening's hospitality by serving such pedigreed Icelandic food as rullupylsa, kleinur, ponnukokur and jolabraud.

Professor Haraldur Bessason, president of Frón, opened the first concert, held in the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church on February 18. The speaker, Rev. Kristjan Robertson, arrived from Iceland last October to serve the Lutheran church in Glenboro. He made interesting comparisons between some aspects of life in Iceland and in Canada as he has observed them. He feels that Icelanders are more forgiving of small flaws in gifted people than Canadians seem to be, and gently chided Icelandic Canadians for losing some of their zest for reading books.

Guttormur J. Guttormsson read an original poem with the lively warmth that has won him applause and renown

through the years; there were murmurs in the audience that the years hadn't stamped a mark of age on the poet's spirit yet. Miss Margret Jonasson and Gustaf Kristjanson sang solos and Miss Gail Dahlman played a piano solo.

A. R. Swanson, president of the Icelandic Canadian Club chaired the second concert, also held in the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church. The main feature was a challenging address by Dr. Hugh H. Saunderson, president of the University of Manitoba, who spoke of the sturdy independence of Canada's pioneer generations and urged today's citizens to contribute with the same kind of fortitude and courage to their community and neighbors, and to their own fortunes.

Another highlight of the concert was the presentation by Judge W. J. Lindal of eight scholarships awarded to young students.

The three children of Mr. and Mrs. Kerr Wilson, Kerrine, Carlisle and Eric, entertained with an instrumental trio. Mrs. Wilson is the former Thelma Guttormsson. Winnipeg's popular folk singers, Norma Vadebonceur and Henri Enns, sang a duet, and there were two quartettes, by groups from the Sweet Adelines. They were the Winnikeys and the Gay Fours.

The third concert changed from the chairmanship of Dr. Richard Beck of Grand Forks, N. D., to that of Rev. Philip M. Petursson as the retiring president handed the reigns of office to the incoming one.

Sigurdur Magnusson, Director, Public Relations, Icelandic Airlines, Loftleiðir, and moderator of a popular radio panel in Reykjavík, gave the address of the evening. He spoke of inherited cultures that bridge distant generations and distant continents. He said that he had grown up in Iceland in a way of life that was a thousand years old and seen it change into a modern and rapidly changing way of life. His lifetime spans the old and the new, he said, and in experience often feels he is a thousand years old.

Mr. Magnusson followed his talk with a showing of a film depicting a dramatic rescue by airplane of aircraft stranded on Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe.

Mrs. Evelyn Allen (nee Thorvaldson) sang a group of Icelandic songs.

Earlier in the evening honorary memberships were presented to Dr. Hugh H. Saunderson, president of the University of Manitoba; Sigurdur Sigurgeirsson, president of the Icelandic National League in Reykjavík, and Olafur Hallson, who has for years served on the executive of the Icelandic National League on this continent.

A representative of the Manitoba Travel Society presented a certificate to Sigurdur Magnusson, proclaiming him "Warden of the Plains". The League presented Mr. Magnusson with a silver cigarette box and entrusted to him a framed document with greetings and good wishes to Loftleiðir.

During this three-day visit Mr. Magnusson received the Manitoba Order of the Buffalo from Health Minister Dr. George Johnson and Winnipeg's Certificate of Merit from Mayor Stephen Juba.

To introduce their speaker, Dr. H. H. Saunderson, and to give delegates an opportunity to meet and mingle, the Icelandic Canadian Club sponsored a noon luncheon in the Georgian Room of the Hudson's Bay store on the second day of the convention.



# *CANADA - Our Heritage*

**by WAYNE ARNASON,**

Canada is a majestic land,
Resplendant from sea to sea:
With stately forests and rippling rills
Which bubble so happily.

By British Columbia's fjord flecked shores
The Douglas fir tree stands:
It seems to call all lumbermen,
From many far-off lands.

The stately Rockies stand at bay,
Caught dead in the modern rush,
Where instead of bus or auto horns,
There is only the Mountains' hush.

The prairies — — a sea of wheat and oats,
Stretch out for many a mile;
Where a combine seems like a floating ship
As it stacks the grain in a pile.

Ontario abounds in Nature's wealth,
A sportsman's paradise,
Where wildlife live in a wonderland
Free from worry and strife.

Up in Quebec where the trappers are
Who catch our furs so fine,
Are the men who work far underground,
In the great Ungava mines.

The Maritimes, the Atlantic shore,
Land of the lobster and cod,
Where fishing is done as a livelihood,
And not with a reel and rod.

This then is our Canada,
A beautiful land indeed,
And it's growing still — like a lovely plant,
Which sprung from a little seed.

N.B. Wayne Arnason is 12 years old. See Icel. Can. Winter 61, p 40.

# ICELAND VISIT

**by Helgi Olsen**

I became curious about Iceland after receiving many glowing letters from relatives residing in that country, and a longing steadily grew in me to go there and see for myself what it was really like. When Mr. Arthur Anderson of the All-Ways Travel Bureau organized a tour to Iceland (Hópferðin) last spring, my wife and I signed on with him — our wishes came true.

At 4:20 a.m. Tuesday the 12th of June, 1962, we boarded a T.C.A. plane at the Winnipeg Airport. There were forty-four members in the group, all of Icelandic descent, and middle-aged, like ourselves.

We arrived in Toronto after an uneventful flight, at 8:15 a.m. and there boarded another plane for New York,, where we arrived at about 11:15 a.m.

A special bus conveyed passengers from one part of the huge International airport to another and by this means we arrived at Loftleiðir—the Icelandic Airlines—office.

However, at 2:20 p..m. we were once again airborne. Unfortunately it was cloudy and misty while we were in New York, so could not see any of the buildings or the famous skyline. In fact, it was cloudy all the way to Goose Bay, Labrador, but the plane flew above the clouds into bright sunshine, with white clouds below us looking like new-fallen snow.

At Goose Bay, where the plane stopped to re-fuel, the passengers disembarked to stretch their legs. The weather was extremely cool, with a biting north wind; snow still lay on the surrounding hills and there was ice in the Bay. It was cloudy all the rest of the way to Iceland. We had lunch aboard the plane about 5 p.m. and at midnight, coffee and cognac were served. There was also a bar where liquor could be purchased by those who wanted it.

We slept intermittently until we were aroused to tighten our safety belts, and the "no smoking" sign appeared on the board. As the plane cut down through the clouds we noticed that we were crossing over the U.S. landing field at Keflavik and so on to the landing strip at the Reykjavik Airport. It was then 6:10 a.m. Reykjavík time.

The passengers for Iceland were asked to leave together so that a picture could be taken going down the flight steps. (There were no speeches of welcome). My first impression on landing was that of primitiveness. The runways were gravelled, but smooth and even; the buildings were rather small. My impression of primitiveness was soon dispelled after being met at the airport by relatives and friends who waited outside the barrier, to welcome us. We were driven through streets, which were well paved and by new and modern apartment houses, which were well spaced, extremely neat and clean, all of concrete construction, and fireproof throughout.

Nearly all apartments are owned by the tenants and are operated on a cooperative basis. This plan appears to function satisfactorily. We were taken to a large 2-bedroom suite with living dining room, kitchen, a large entrance hall, and bath. This suite was located on the fourth floor of an 8-storey modern apartment block in the mid-eastern section of the city, called Hátún 4. The block has an automatic lift and is heated by the natural hot springs of the country.



Reykjavík is a contrast mixture of the old and the new. The older section with its narrow streets and short blocks seems so terribly congested, with cars, trucks, gas buses all in a rush and pedestrians crossing the streets at all points. The sidewalks in a few places, are only two feet wide, but in others they are six to eight feet wide. Towards the outskirts of the town the walks are only cinder paths.

There are parks and open places, for example the lake or "Tjörn", where at noon hour people take their lunches and feed the ducks that swarm around when being fed bread scraps. Then there is the park where Ingolf's statue stands on a high knoll and where the June 17th festivities take place.

The newer sections with their modern apartments and wider streets are very interesting. Reykjavík does not cover a large tract of land, but with so many people living in apartments, the city's population is close to the 80,000 mark. There are many buildings eight, ten and fourteen storeys high, with roughly six suites to each floor.

The stores are not so well stocked as ours. I missed the large department stores. There are many stores selling specialized goods that are hidden away on side streets, away from the rush sections. Their prices are reasonable. except on luxury items, where a heavy import tax is levied. There is a big demand for souvenirs during the summer season, but not a great deal to choose from.

One interesting attraction is the hot steam wells that have been bored east on Suðurlandsbraut. One was completed and piped down to a distance of 7,000 feet. When the valve is turned on, the steam, with so much pressure, shoots up 200 to 300 feet and is viewed often by tourists, since Geysir, the famous natural spout has ceased spouting. (Some claim that Geysir has been choked by too much soap). These steam wells will be used as a standby for future use for heating homes.

The weather was rather too cool to our liking so that we had to wear top coats most of the time. In spite of the backward weather, the flowers were blooming nicely, and the grass was nice and green. Wherever a spot could be found around a building, there was green grass and flowers, with trees in many stages of growth—especially the mountain ash, which seems to be a favorite.

A long forward step is being taken in draining peat bogs, ditches being dug throughout the countryside. Badly needed usable land is thus provided. Milk cows are increasing in numbers on the farms, as the demand for milk is ever on the growing scale, as the population increases. Milk is very reasonably priced—about 6 kr. or 15 cents a quart, Canadian money. (The official exchange rate is 40 kr. to the Canadian dollar, 43 kr. to the American dollar.)

Iceland uses the metric system which is a bit confusing at first. Another difference is that they drive on the left side of the road and it is very awkward for those driving American cars with the steering wheel on the left side. Volkswagons seem to be the most popular car, with Chevrolets second. The Jeeps were popular once, but don't

seem to stand up, and are very uncomfortable to ride in.

The roads throughout the country I found quite passable, all graded and gravelled, but narrow. When meeting, one has to slow right down to pass. The bridges are narrow, but solid.

Our first day we spent getting better acquainted with the people that gave us so warm a welcome. Nothing was too good for us. They even gave up their bedroom for us. The beds over there are all built on the twin bed pattern, but joined together. Separate mattresses and separate eider-down ticks are very comfortable. No sheets are used.

The furniture, which is modelled after the Scandinavian style, is all made in Iceland. The wood, of course, is all imported, mostly teakwood from India. Carpets and floor mats are manufactured in Iceland; also the upholstering material. The work is all done in modern factories, with modern machinery and excellent workmanship.

The food is very similar wherever one goes—fish and lamb. Beef is very scarce and not of the best variety. Pork and pork products we never saw. Breakfast was coffee and open sandwiches, with cheese or tomatoes, or hangikjöt (smoked mutton), with sliced cucumbers and hard-boiled eggs. The milk is sold there in peculiar pyramid shaped paper containers which are very awkward to handle, but in plentiful supply. The other meals are invariably fish or lamb, with skyr or prune sago pudding brought in in a large bowl. Soup plates are set before each one—you help yourself to that and to rich cream to cover all. You are always urged to take more. Coffee follows with milk (not cream), and sugar.

We wandered around the city quite often. The bus was handy to our apartment, so we used that bus a lot to get downtown. The fare was cheap (roughly five cents). The drivers give no transfers, and do not give any change, as there are no cash fares, but tickets by the card are available. They are polite but firm. Passengers entering at the front door must go out the back door. As the drivers get out to register at the end of a run, the people, being so honest, drop their tickets into the box and go in and sit down. There is a central downtown terminal from which all buses start. From there they go to different parts of the city.

The policemen are a fine looking set of men. With their dark-blue uniforms, white Sam Brown belts, white gloves neatly tucked under the belt, and white caps, they make quite a picture. They are all tall and good looking fellows, very obliging in giving directions and very polite in answering all questions.

Reykjavík is very clean. Regular cleaners pick up all rubbish and trash. The morning following the big celebration June 17th, that lasted into the early morning hours, the streets were all clean—one would never suspect that they had been so messy the night before. Women and school children volunteer to help to see that the city is kept clean at all times.

It was Wednesday morning when we arrived in Reykjavík. The weather was very cool. We went out for a walk in the afternoon, but it was very uncomfortable, so we didn't go far. In the evening some of our hosts' children came over for coffee. We stayed up to see the sun set, after midnight.

The Þjóðræknisfélag of Iceland invited all the visitors for a sight-seeing tour of Reykjavík the day after our arrival. We were taken to Einar Jónsson's Museum of Sculpture—a wonderful collection of his work that we all admired so much, and to so many other places of great interest.



(When I lived in Shoal Lake, east of Lundar, one of our neighbors' wife used to speak so much of Einar Jónsson. She had been brought up in the same household and was called "Stóra Ella", and Einar had a step-sister who was called "Litla Ella". This neighbor of ours used to tell us how Einar was always after her to show him how to whittle and make some objects or toys although the boy was only four or five years old at the time. It showed how natural was his instinct for carving and later to sculpture. Einar thought so much of his old-time friend that he made a special trip from the United States, where he was travelling at the time, to visit her at her home in Shoal Lake. That was in the summer of 1917.)

On our tour of Reykjavík we visited, besides the Einar Jonsson's Museum, the new Ness Church, Mela school with the newest in modern architecture, the home for aged seamen, the old folks home, the steam well and other places. To finish up we were entertained by the Mayor of Reykjavík and the council, with refreshments and speeches, in the reception hall of the City Hall.

The following day eighteen of our group hired a sight-seeing bus that took us up to Þingvellir. On the way there the bus stopped and we got off—we were on the heights overlooking Hveradal. It was very windy and cool; while standing there my hat blew off and over the precipice. I had just bought that hat before going on this trip, so was sorry to see it go. Before I knew, the guide had gone down after the hat, and after about a half hour climb, came up again with my hat safe and sound in his hands. You may be sure that I took better care of it after that.

The road led downward in a winding trail to the lower level, to the town of Hveragerði, where a large number of greenhouses, all heated by the natural hot springs that are so prominent there. In those greenhouses they grow flowers of all description, vegetables enough to supply the demand in Reykjavík and surrounding districts. Fruits, yes, and even bananas are grown there. There is also a power dam close by that supplies power and lights to the town and the greenhouses.

The bus drove on to Þingvellir through very rough lava country, with high mountains and peat bogs at intervals. We had our first sight of sheep grazing high up on the mountain sides, where there was green foliage to graze on, but most of the mountains were bare rock, with interesting shapes and colors.

We were the only visitors to Þingvellir that day, so had the place pretty well to ourselves.

We stopped at the restaurant and had dinner of fresh lake trout, which were served whole to each diner. The waitress had them cut up in pieces that were more convenient. That fish really was delicious.

We then drove around and up to Almannagjá, a very interesting rock formation that had split open, leaving a wall of Balsic pillar-like rock, almost black in color, and straight up and down. Through this gap the paved road winds up to the west. On the slope facing the south and facing the lake was the spot where the first Icelandic parliament was held. There is a stone marked with the name "Lögberg" engraved on it to mark the exact spot. The wall behind resounds the voice, so that those sitting below could hear the speakers plainly. That

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is why that place was chosen for the "Alþing" that met there yearly for so many years (from 930 A.D.). Þingvalla Lake is a very beautiful sight, with its shoreline marked with varied rock formations and the fast flowing river. Below is the hotel, while to your left is the church and the parson's residence, with the double-gable front—painted white, and with the typical red roof.

Þingvellir is the most revered spot in all Iceland and is the first "must" to visit by all the tourists, and, in my opinion it is rightly so. There is only one drawback, and that is the lack of tourist accommodation. Many bring their own tents, but otherwise sleeping and washing facilities are badly needed, especially when there is something going on there; for instance, the Hestamannamót, horse show, that takes place every summer, and lasts for three days. They bring their horses there from all over the country to be judged and to be shown off. The horses were very uniform in size although different in color. They have one distinction peculiar to Icelandic ponies—most are pacers and move along so smoothly when running.

June 17th is a big occasion all across Iceland, that being the birthday of their famous statesman, Jón Sigurðsson. In Reykjavík, that day started with the President, Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, laying a wreath at the cemetery south of the city. Following that was a church ceremony at the Central Cathedral. The church was so crowded that people stood in the aisles and in the doorway, while hundreds stood outside waiting for the end of the service and for the President to emerge. When he did come out he was greeted with cheers and spontaneous handclapping.

The main affair took place on the knoll where Ingólf's statue stands. The speakers' platform was on the north, below the statue, while the people sat or stood as a drizzling rain fell.

In the evening everything was wide open—the bars, eating places, and dance halls. On the streets, orchestras had set up stands and there they played dance music — mostly jazz — while the crowd danced, or tried to dance. Amplifiers were everywhere—you could hear what was going on blocks away. There were also booths set up all over to sell soft drinks, and "pilsur", as the hot dogs were called. Also sold in those booths was candy, gum, and "blöðrur" (rubber balloons).

We were down there until one or two a.m. Things were getting a bit rowdy so we went home. It was daylight all the time, but the rain had let up.

The next day at 1:15 (by the way, in Iceland, officially they use the 24-hour clock to specify the time, as for instance 1:15 would read 13:15)—we all met at the Hotel Borg and were conveyed by special bus to the home of the president of Iceland, Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, at Bessastaðir. We were given a hearty welcome by the President and his warm-hearted wife. It was very informal. They mixed with the guests and discussed their trip through Canada last summer, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Coffee was served by two dainty, fairhaired maids, so neatly dressed, and so polite.

A picture was taken by a photographer of the group, with the President and his wife in the centre. The picture was taken in the large living or reception room of Bessastaðir. Four hours later that picture was available to the group at the gestamót that evening in the Hotel Borg.

Bessastaðir is to Iceland what the White House is to the United States—the seat of the Presidency. The house is

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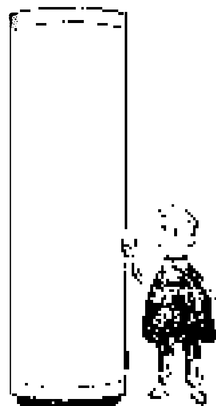

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large with many rooms. As this is the official home of the President, it is also the official reception centre of all diplomatic and honored visitors. Bessastaðir is situated on the flats in Alftanesi. To get there one has to drive a long about way, through Kopavogur, and west around the bays. The church is close by. The building has beautiful stained-glass windows, and is surrounded by lovely green lawns or 'tun' as they are called there. The visit was enjoyed by all those who attended. On the way back, a detour was made to take us through the town of Hafnafjörð, built on the rugged mountain side, but very interesting with a very good view out to sea.

On Monday evening, the 18th of June, we of the "Hópferð" were invited to the Hotel Borg for an evening's entertainment. Coffee was served while an interesting program was going on. The Reykjavík Men's Choir sang a number of songs—a woman singer sang some solos. The visitors from Canada were introduced—as the names were read, each guest stood up and took a bow. There was supposed to have been dancing, but the rooms were so crowded that there was no space left for dancing, so that was called off.

Hotel Borg has been in existence since 1930, when it was built to help take care of the visitors that came to Iceland that year for the 1000 Year's Anniversary of the first "Alþing" that was established in 930. To relieve the congestion in the downtown area a new and very modern hotel is being built in the south-west section, called Hotel Saga. It will be in operation this winter.

When visiting our cousin Rev. Friðrik A. Friðriksson at Húsavík, he gave me the names of his brothers and sisters whose homes were in Reykjavík. We did not meet either of the two sisters as they were away from Reykjavík at the time, but we did meet the two brothers. Björgvin, the oldest of the two is a baker by trade; Ólafur is an accountant. They are large shareholders in and operate and control the largest bakery in Reykjavík, an immense four-storey building on Borgartún. They also have a large chicken ranch east of Reykjavík, with over 5,000 hens. The eggs and poultry are processed at the plant and sold wholesale. They also control a pig ranch, where close to 1,000 pigs are kept. I don't know what they do with the pork, as one does not see any pork products in any of the stores. White bread as we are used to is not made in Iceland. French loaves and brown bread are the usual breads. The bread is baked in modern ovens and up-to-date machinery handles the bread from start to finish. This is a wholesale establishment so they distribute the bread to the stores only. They have a number of panel trucks that they use for that purpose—they seem to have a good going concern.

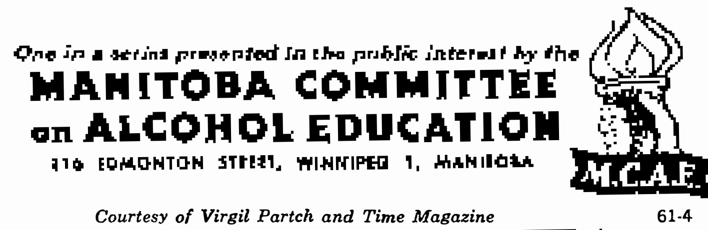
Mr. Samuel Kristbjarnarson and his good wife were our hosts the time that we stayed in Reykjavík. Better hosts one could not wish for. We were made to feel at home there, not only as honored guests, but as members of their family. They made arrangements for us to meet their friends and relatives while they in turn invited us out to their homes where we were entertained regally.

What surprised nearly all that we met over there was, that I, being born in Canada, (or as they say over there, "in America"), could speak their language. I did find some difficulty in following their talk at times as they speak so fast, but outside of that drawback I got along admirably with both young and old.

# That Drink You Urge A Guest To Take . . .

- WILL IT LATER BE THE CAUSE OF A QUARREL?
- WILL IT SHOVE THE GUEST ONE STEP FURTHER TO ALCOHALISM?
- WILL IT LEAD TO A SERIOUS OR FATAL TRAFFIC ACCIDENT?

It's never wise to urge anyone to drink.




Courtesy of Virgil Partch and Time Magazine 61-4




# SCHOLARSHIPS

## OBTAINS GOVERNOR GENERALS MEDAL

**Helen Cecilia Arnason** of Spruce Home, Sask., on completing her grade 12 in Prince Albert, was awarded the Governor General's Medal for Saskatchewan. Helen is at present taking First Year Arts at the University of Saskatchewan.

★

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

**Verne Gudjon Johnson,** a first-year engineering student at the University of Manitoba has been awarded an Alcan Scholarship.

Mr. Johnson, who holds three other scholarships at the university, intends to work towards his master's degree in engineering.

He is a graduate of the Lundar Collegiate Institute.

Alcan scholarships are provided by the Aluminum Co. of Canada.

★

The University of Manitoba has lately announced $42,000 in awards and bursaries. The names in the list that we know to be Icelandic are as follows:

**Maria June Magnusson**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Agnar Magnusson, Garfield St., Winnipeg, won a Margery Brooker Scholarship —$200.00.

★

**Eric Wilson,** son of Mr. and Mrs. Kerr Wilson, was one of six winners in the Artists of Tomorrow contest sponsored by the Jewish Women's Musical Club. Eric is a very promising young cellist.

★

**Sigurberg Ormar Thorlacius,** of Ashern, Man., won a Dr. John P. Shaw scholarship fund award, and a Winnipeg Kiwanis Clubb scholarship.

The Manitoba Institute of Agrologists' scholarship has also been awarded to Sigurberg, who is a third year student in agriculture. The scholarship is worth $200.00 and is awarded annually.

Mr. Thorlacius is 25. He became a teacher and in 1961 enrolled at the University. During the past two years he has received top marks for his class.

★

**Rosemary Johnson,** daughter of Mrs. Jon Johnson of Winnipeg, and the late Jon Johnson, at one time president of Frón (Icelandic National League) won a Winnipeg District Association Manitoba Teachers' Society Bursary in Education and Schoolmasters' Wives' Association Scholarship.

★

**Keith Halderson** won a Manitoba Pool Elevators Bursary.

★

**Karen Ingibjorg Johannson,** daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Skuli Johannsson of Winnipeg, won a T. Eaton Art Scholarship.

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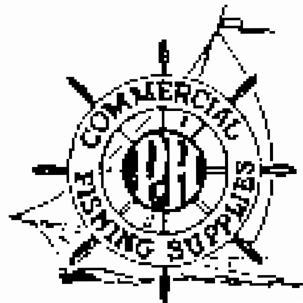


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— The sunny day, the rainy day, each instant has its place.
— And now your seeds have blossomed to a giant family tree,
— So full of growth and beauty and as endless as the sea.
And like the evening sunset reflects a promised day
To follow all the others that we've filled with work and play,
Your family tree reflects your life, your thoughts, your deeds, your hopes;
We never can repay you in the way that we would like,
Our love for you will long outlast the strongest ocean dyke.

**Lois**

NOTE:— Lois, Mrs. Hugh Brown, is a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Hillman of Evarts, Alberta. Her mother, Johanna, Mrs. Eddy Day, is according to John "a real Icelander and proud of it". Lois is the oldest of 36 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. The little formal education John Hillman received was provided in a log school house built by the pioneers on the old Stephen G. Stephansson farm. —Editor.

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# *IN THE NEWS*

## PSYCHIATRIST

Dr. Robert E. Helgason

**Dr. Robert E. Helgason** has recently been successful in passing his certifications examinations on the specialty of Psychiatry, after completing four years of post graduate training in psychiatry, at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and McGill University, Montreal.

Dr. Helgason is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Helgason, D'Arcy, Sask. He is married; his wife Margaret, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. S. Johnson, Glenboro, Man. They have three children, Roger, Susan and Catherine. They reside at 4668 Burke St., S. Burnaby, B.C.

After receiving his M.D. degree in 1945 Dr. Helgason practised medicine in Glenboro, Man., for thirteen years. He is now employed by the B.C. Mental Health Services.

—Logberg-Heimskringla

## CHEMISTRY ACE

Eric A. Gislason

**Eric A. Gislason,** son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond S. Gislason of North Lombard Avenue, was graduated from Oberlin (Ohio) college summa cum laude, with honors in chemistry, his major, at the commencement exercises in June.

He was president of his class as a freshman and as a senior, was chairman of the student educational policy committee, and a member of the forensic union and of the golf team. He received academic honors for scholastic achievement throughout his Oberlin career, ranking among the top ten in his class each year, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi, received the Harry Holmes prize, and

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was endorsed for a Rhodes scholarship.

When Eric graduated from High School a study was made all over the U. S. as to how High School graduates ranked in mathematics. Eric ranked first in Illinois and 6th in the U.S.A. He is now in the graduate school of Harvard University, where he is studying for his Ph.D. in Chemistry. He married Nancy Davis Brown, also a graduate of Oberlin college.

Eric's grandfather was Judge Arni B. Gislason of New Ulm, Minn., who was the son of Björn Gislason from Haugstaðir, Vopnafirði, Iceland.

—Logberg-Heimskringla

★

### DONALD K. GESTSON of Portland Helped Build N-Ship Reactor

The NS Savannah, the first American nuclear-powered merchant ship, stopped in the Portland, Oregon, harbor a short time ago. Donald K. Gestson, an engineer with the Atomic Energy Division of Babcock & Wilcox Co., Lynchburg, Va., is one of five engineers who perfected the reactor which powers the giant nuclear ship.

The Savannah, originally a steam vessel, burns, instead of traditional fuel, uranium oxide enriched with uranium 235.

Donald Gestson, who obtained his high school education in Milwaukee, Oregon, is a graduate of the University of Oregon. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Kris Gestson of Milwaukie, who were born in Gardar, North Dakota.

★

### ELECTED REGENT

Mrs. H. F. Danielson was elected regent at the annual meeting of Jon Sigurdson Chapter I.O.D.E., Winnipeg, in February. She succeeds Mrs. A. F. Wilson. Mrs. A. G. Henrickson was named first vice-regent, Mrs. E. W. Perry second vice-regent, Mrs. Ena S. Andeson secretary, Mrs. Gus Gottfried treasurer, Mrs. Paul Goodman educational secretary, Mrs. Ben Heidman services secretary, Mrs. Gestur Kristjansson Echoes secretary and Mrs. Runa Jonasson standard bearer. Mrs. Danielson has served for 22 years as secretary of the chapter and for five years as provincial educational secretary, and has been honored with a life membership in her own chapter as well as in the provincial chapter for outstanding leadership in the field of education and cultural activities.

★

### ON IMPORTANT BOARDS

At the January meeting of the Council of the City of Winnipeg **Mr. John V. Samson** was re-appointed a member of the Board of Police Commissioners. He was also appointed a member of the Board of Parks and Recreation and at the first meeting of that Board was appointed chairman of the Finance Committee.

★

### MISS CREDIT UNION

Those who remember the former Emily Axdal, now Mrs. Carl Allan of Niagara Falls, Ont., will be interested to learn that her 15 year old daughter Judy was recently chosen Beauty Queen of the Greater Niagara and District Credit Union Chapter.

Judy, one of six girls competing for the title, represented Niagara Falls Civil Service Credit Union. Her father, Carl Allan, is a customs officer. In March she will compete in Toronto for the Provincial title.

Judy, who received a number of

prizes, is the neice of Mr. S. K. Axdal of Wynyard, and granddaughter of Mrs. J. Axdal, now residing in Vancouver, and the late Thorur S. Axdal.
—Wynyard Advance


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## DISTINGUISHED GEOLOGIST

Dr. Sigurður Thorarinsson

Dr. Sigurður Thorarinsson, Director Department of Geology and Geography, Museum of Natural History, Reykjavík, Iceland, has been in the United States and Canada delivering lectures to universities on volcanoes, which has been the special subject of his research studies. He delivered a number of lectures at the University of Manitoba and on March 25 addressed a gathering in the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church. He showed interesting slides and the most vivid colored moving picture of the eruption of volcanoes in Dyngjufjöll in Iceland in the year 1961.

At noon on Wednesday March 27, a luncheon was tendered to Dr. Thorarinsson under the auspices of the Icelandic National League. In his reply Dr. Thorarinsson emphasized the need of scholarships to encourage students interested in Icelandic studies here and in Iceland.

## ON EMPLOYMENT MISSION

Rev. Robert Jack

Rev. Robert Jack arrived in Winnipeg on March 25, on a mission to explore the possibilities of attracting young men and women to work in Iceland. Strange though this may appear in Canada and the U.S.A., there is a shortage of semi-skilled and unskilled labour in Iceland. In a message of introduction His Ex. Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, the President of Iceland, said that this assignment of "investigating whether it would not be possible to engage people from Caanda to work in Iceland during the part of the year when there is unemployment in Canada, but a busy time here" is cooperation which would "be very desirable for both parties concerned".

As an initial step in this cooperative movement Rev. Jack hopes to receive offers from 20 to 30 energetic single young men of acceptance of employment in Iceland.

✦

**John Aaron Christianson** of Portage la Prairie has been Minister of Welfare in the Roblin government of Manitoba since the election of 1959. Although a newcomer in hte provincial

house, he was appointed to the cabinet, where he soon mastered his portfolio and gave a very good account of himself. In the election of 1962 however he was defeated at the polls. This was not due to any lack of success as a minister, but because of a purely local issue, the diversion of the Assiniboine River. An interesting story of Mr. Christianson and his work was written by Val Werier of the Winnipeg Tribune, and is carried in the Jan. 24 issue of Logberg-Heimskringla. It is to be hoped that Mr. Christianson will again be called upon to make a contribution to the province as a member of a cabinet in Manitoba.

★

Grand Forks, N.D. — Dr. Richard Beck, chairman of modern and classical languages at the University of North Dakota, has been named to the National Association of Standard Medical Vocabulary. He will serve as a consultant in the Scandinavian languages.

The scholastic organization includes 2,900 university presidents, deans and professors. Purpose of the group is to stabilize the vocabulary of the medical and allied sciences.

Dr. Beck, who was recently added to a permanent list of reviewers for the American Historical Review, has been a professor of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University since 1929, and is in his 10th year as department head. He has written many articles and book reviews on Scandinavian subjects, notably Icelandic and Norwegian, and has authored, co-authored or edited more than a dozen books in his field.

★

Hon. Valdimar Bjornson, Minnesota state treasurer, was guest speaker when Icelanders in Chicago, Illinois, celebrated Thorrablot Feb. 9th at a gathering in the Black Steer Restaurant, N., Avenue, Chicago. Officers of the association in Chicago, elected at the annual meeting last fall, are president Valur Egilson, vice-president Einar H. Bachman, secretary Thorsteinn Helgason, treasurer L. Erna Thorarinson and Thrainn Sigurdsson, member of the executive.

★

To mark the centennial of Iceland's National Museum, founded Feb. 24, 1863,the Icelandic government on Feb. 20 issued two stamps in denominations of 4.00 and 5.50 kronur.

The smaller denomination shows a portrait of Sigurdur Gudmundsson, painter and scholar and the museum's first curator.

The other stamp shows a detail from the carving on the church door from Valþjófsstað. The carving is the most outstanding work of art preserved in Iceland from the period of about 1200.

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