



Commodore O. C. S. Robertson receives honorary degree

Commodore O. C. S. Robertson, Deputy Executive Director of the Arctic Institute of North America, has been awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science by McGill University. The citation that follows was read at the fall convocation of the University on October 7, 1963 in Montreal, Canada.

"Mr. Chancellor, I present to you now Owen Connor Struan Robertson; sailor, scientist and friend of this university, Commodore Retired in the Royal Canadian Navy, and Deputy Executive Director of the Arctic Institute of North America.

"Commodore Robertson from his early youth committed himself to the sea. In 1938 he was mobilized as a naval officer. Early in the war he went to Halifax as Captain of the Dockyard, and in that capacity acquired a national reputation. On November 3rd, 1943, the United States freighter *Volunteer*, carrying a heavy cargo of high explosives, caught fire in Bedford Basin, and threatened to repeat the disaster of 1917, when the explosion of a similar vessel killed 1,600 Halifaxians. Robertson was able to get the ship out of the Basin, and sink her in shallow water, thereby extinguishing the fire and saving the ship. For this act he was awarded the George Medal.

"In 1952 he was appointed to command H.M.C.S. *Labrador* then building at Sorel, and began the remarkable series of Arctic voyages that made his name an honoured one among scientists. He took the *Labrador* through the Northwest Passage on her maiden voyage, and also sailed with several United States Task Forces; he commanded Task Force 6.3 during the building of the DEW line. The opening of the Canadian Arctic and the oceanographic work achieved on these voyages put all scientists in his debt, especially for his enthusiasm for the cause of research. He ended his naval career as our Naval Attaché in Washington. Recently he organized the very successful McGill-Arctic Institute Symposium on the Canadian Arctic.

"Mr. Chancellor, Commodore Robertson already holds the George Medal, the Canada Decoration, and the Massey Medal; yet he continues to say that he is a mere fishhead sailor, and is no scientist. To disabuse him of these illusions, I now invite you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*."

Obituary notices

George M. Douglas (1875-1963), engineer and explorer, died at his home in Lakefield, Ontario, Canada earlier this year. He was born in Halifax, N.S., Canada and received his education in Canada and Great Britain. During a long career as engineer and consulting engineer in Mexico and Arizona, U.S.A. he led five expeditions into the regions around Great Bear and Great Slave lakes in the Northwest Territories of Canada. He was mainly interested in copper and other mineral deposits and on his first expedition went as far afield as Coppermine River, where he found that the copper deposits, which had been known since the 18th century, were larger than had been suspected. He did mainly pioneering work in these areas, which formed the foundations for later explorations.

Besides articles for professional journals he wrote "Lands Forlorn" (G. P.

Putnam's Sons, New York, 1914), an account of the expedition in 1911-12. In 1949 he was elected a Fellow of the Arctic Institute and he was also a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Geographical Society, a member of several professional societies and of American and Canadian clubs.

Dr. Olaus J. Murie (1889-1963), biologist, and a Fellow of the Arctic Institute since 1949, died at his home in Moose, Wyoming, U.S.A. in October. He did considerable field work in New Zealand, Labrador, and Alaska. His faunal studies in the Arctic were mainly concerned with the biology and ecology of large mammals, but his interests extended also to ornithology.

He had been Director of the Wilderness Society since 1946 and was active

in wild life conservation in wilderness environments. In recognition of his many achievements he received an honorary degree, as well as many other honours and awards.

Dr. L. E. Borden, an Associate of the Arctic Institute of long standing, died at Vancouver, B.C., Canada last summer at the age of 86. He was the last surviving member of the first Canadian Arctic Expedition in the *Neptune* under Capt. A. P. Low, in which he took part as medical officer. He had in his custody documents relating to Capt. Low's taking possession of "the island of Ellesmereland and all the smaller islands adjoining it". This declaration was read in the Canadian House of Commons in 1956, when the question of Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago was being debated.

Reviews

THE FUTURE OF ALASKA. Economic consequences of statehood. By GEORGE W. ROGERS. *Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press. 9¼ x 6 inches. xiii + 311 pages, 10 text figures, 20 plates. \$6.50.*

Two myths persist about the North. According to one the North is a wondrous land, full of natural resources just waiting to be tapped, a vast storehouse of riches that will in time attract settlers and become as densely peopled as the temperate middle latitudes. To this myth adhere the proponents of what might be termed the "Look what the Russians have done in their North" school. The other, or "Seward's Ice Box" school write off the North completely as a rocky, barren, isolated, cold, dark wilderness. Both myths are rooted in reality, for the North, however defined, is so vast that practically anything that can be said about it is true — to a greater or a smaller degree. It can be, and has been, all things to all men.

Objective assessments of the North, its resources and its future, are rare.

Studies and statements by outside authorities tend to carry little weight among the residents of the North; if they attack the myth of the rich North, they are termed pessimistic (which is bad) or obstructionist (which is worse). Assessments by residents seldom achieve any degree of objectivity.

Dr. George Rogers's new book has the singular merit of having been written by a resident of Alaska, who is also an objective and expert student of the state's economic development. Dr. Rogers has lived in Alaska for seventeen years, and served as advisor and consultant to the Territorial and State governments. He is currently a consultant to the State Division of Planning, and Professor of Business Economics and Government at the University of Alaska. The present study, the second in the series, was sponsored by the Arctic Institute of North America and Resources for the Future, Inc.

In addition to becoming entangled