

Although never an associate of the Arctic Institute of North America, we on this continent have felt his inspiration and join the rest of the world and his large family in mourning the loss of a great and lovable polar enthusiast.

P. D. BAIRD

### Yakov Yakovlevich Gakkel' (1901-1965)

Yakov Yakovlevich Gakkel' died in Leningrad on 30 December 1965 after a short illness. He was a geographer of the broadest kind, who gave almost the whole of his working life to arctic studies. He enjoyed a considerable reputation in the Soviet Union, and became known overseas mainly in the last phase of his life, when he was working on problems of the Arctic Ocean.

He was born in 1901 in St. Petersburg, and was educated there. In 1921 he joined the Geographical Institute, which became in 1925 the geography faculty of Leningrad University. During this period he undertook his first expeditions: to study limnology in Karelia in 1924, and geomorphology in Yakutia in 1925. Meanwhile he was already active in sea-ice studies during the winters in the Gulf of Finland.

In 1932 he joined the Arctic Institute, also in Leningrad, where he was to remain until his death. He was associated with many different sides of the Institute's work — oceanography, sea-ice studies, navigational problems, geomagnetism, geomorphology, and the history of exploration. He was in turn Head of various departments, latterly of that of geography and history of exploration, and in 1941-42 he was Deputy Director for Research.

While with the Arctic Institute, he took part, often as leader, in 21 expeditions. Among the best-known of these were the first one-season navigation of the Northern Sea Route in the *Sibiryakov* in 1932, the ill-fated *Chelyuskin* expedition of 1933-34, high-latitude expeditions in *Sadko* in 1936 and *Ob'* in 1956, and the first double transit of the Route in the *Mossovet* in 1937. In 1948 he became interested in the idea, then mooted, of making wide use of the technique of studying the central polar basin by means of drifting stations on the ice. He was active in the work which led to the identification of the Lomonosov submarine ridge, and devoted much time to construction of bathymetric charts of the Arctic Ocean, based largely on drifting station data. This in turn led to an interest in the relation between bottom relief and the structure of the earth, a study he pursued with success, and on which he was still engaged when he died.

He published widely in many fields. Of particular note are his contributions to sea-ice studies, especially on drift of floes; to problems of practical seamanship, such as magnetic compass behaviour; to the geomorphology of the Arctic Ocean (one of his last papers was a contribution on this subject to the still unpublished American *Encyclopaedia of Earth Sciences*); and to the history of Arctic studies, notably his history of the Arctic Institute (*Za chetvert' veka*, 1945) and his more general survey of Soviet achievements in this sphere (*Nauka i osvoyeniye Arktiki*, 1957).

He received the degree of Candidate of Geographical Sciences in 1938, Doctor in 1950 and the rank of Professor in 1953.

He did not travel abroad much, and therefore was little known personally to his foreign colleagues. He was a likeable person, large, good-humoured, and

helpful. I saw him last at an evening party in Leningrad three months before his death. The question arose: which of the company — all were polar specialists — had been longest at this game? Very modestly, he made his claim — and won by a year. When a scientist of the experience and judgement of Yakov Yakovlevich is no longer among us, we all feel the loss.

TERENCE ARMSTRONG

### George Watson (1892-1965)

George Watson, retired district manager of the Hudson's Bay Company, died at Lachine, Que. on 25 December, 1965.

He was born on 25 September, 1892 in Aberdeen, Scotland. After finishing his education and working for a short time there, he, like so many of his young fellow countrymen, joined the Hudson's Bay Company and came to Canada in June, 1914.

After spending three years at Norway House in northern Manitoba, he was transferred to Moose Factory, James Bay, where he remained until 1925, first as district accountant and later as assistant district manager. At that time, when communications were not what they are today, both these places were the administrative and distribution centres of the large Indian territories around them.

Coming to Montreal in 1926, he was appointed assistant to the manager of the then recently amalgamated districts comprising Quebec, Labrador, Ungava, and the Eastern Arctic. Promoted to district manager in 1931, he directed the operations of several of these areas until his retirement in 1954, after forty years of service. During most of this period, he had occasion to travel extensively throughout these territories and thus acquired an intimate knowledge of them and of their economic and sociological problems that is given to few today.

Rather reluctantly George Watson came out of retirement to serve as temporary Director of the Montreal office of the Arctic Institute from 1955 to 1957. While there, his keen administrative ability and long experience in northern work proved to be most useful.

George Watson was married in August 1919 to Edith Parsloe Cruickshank, also an Aberdonian, who had entered Canada by way of Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay for her marriage in Moose Factory. He is survived by his wife and one son, George Jr., both of whom reside in Lachine, Que.

J. CANTLEY