

Anna Monson

For the past decade the editorial office of *Arctic* has been in the capable hands of a woman of varied experience, unusual achievement and quiet initiative. Anna Monson wears these qualities very modestly, so that it is proper, now that she is retiring from that post, to expose something of the light that she has been hiding.

Born in Canada, Mrs. Monson went to St. Helen's School, Abingdon, England; from there to Macdonald College of McGill University and finally to the Secretariat Course at the Mother House in Montreal. Employed at first in the McGill University Library, she became Secretary to the Chairman of the Department of Chemistry who was at the time also Director of Chemical Warfare, Canadian Department of Defence. This started her off on a career of writing and editing of reports in a variety of diplomatic and international offices in which, no doubt, she bullied her bosses into common sense and decent English to such effect that the organizations in which she worked became more influential than they would have been without her. She began in the Canadian Embassy in Mexico (1945-47), and from there to the United Nations in New York, where from 1947 to 1951 she edited reports on cartography, standards of living, tropical housing and refugees. From 1951 to 1957, in the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, she became Liaison Officer with U.N. specialized agencies and several inter-governmental organizations, and finally Professional Assistant in the Public Information Section. From 1957 to 1963 she was Reports and Liaison Officer in the World Health Organization, Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office.

Anna Monson has thus worked in Montreal, in Mexico City, New York, and the Eastern Mediterranean region. Throughout this colourful career, however, she has suffered from the unfulfilled desire to work in Arctic Canada. I am in the possession of privileged information, which can now be released, that in 1945 she sold everything except her skis and her tennis racquet, in anticipation of taking a job in the Arctic (tennis racquet?). At that time, however, the decision was that there was "no accommodation for women in the North", so she sold her skis and took the racquet to Mexico.



With or without personal Arctic experience, there is no doubt that Anna's experience made her an ideal editor of a scientific journal, and the Arctic Institute was fortunate to be able to enlist her services for *Arctic*. In a very short time she managed to get the journal out on time, no mean achievement in the first place, and she has managed also to maintain the very high standards of content, language, and arrangement set by her predecessors, notably Diana Rowley and Paul Bruggemann. Speaking as a contributor, I can add that she also succeeded in keeping the peace between herself and her contributors, something that speaks for her diplomatic training — for friction can develop very rapidly between author and editor unless one at least of the parties has that rare combination of firmness and understanding that makes for effective publication.

We express to Anna Monson our acknowledged gratitude, and our wishes that she will continue from strength to strength and at last find herself working in the North. Not the least of her qualities is an impressive determination and staying power in the face of discouragement and handicap. Some years ago she had an incipient reputation as a sculptor; perhaps this may furnish a passport to the North, for many artists have found happy hunting grounds there.

M. J. Dunbar