



PAUL MARINUS HANSEN

1901 - 1976

Dr. Paul Marinus Hansen, distinguished marine biologist, Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America, and for many years Director of the Greenland Fisheries Research Organization, died in January 1976. No notice of his death or recognition of his accomplishments has been published in North America, and it is appropriate that this omission should be put right in the columns of *Arctic*. Had he been an "explorer", a "geographer", or perhaps even an anthropologist, there would have been obituaries and to spare on this side of the Atlantic, but for some reason biologists are not considered by the general polar reading public as heavy timber; perhaps the fact that their achievements are more useful than spectacular, and that they seem to the layman to be somewhat removed from the business of humanity, has something to do with it.

Paul Hansen was born in November 1901, in Hellerup, a suburb of Copenhagen. At the University of Copenhagen one of his professors was Dr. Adolf Jensen, the acknowledged founder of Greenland fisheries research, who

in 1908 and 1909 directed the work of the "Tjalfe" Expeditions in West Greenland, and who continued as Director and Advisor on Greenland marine research until Paul Hansen took over in the years before the Second World War. In 1946, the research was officially reorganized in the formation of the Institute of Greenland Fisheries Research, with Hansen as leader, established first in the University Zoological Museum and later (1950) in Charlottenlund Castle where all the rest of the Danish Fisheries research effort was housed.

Hansen's work stands as a model for the development of a fishery, based on abundant empirical evidence and sound theory. His monumental "Studies on the biology of the cod in Greenland waters" earned him the doctorate degree at the University of Copenhagen, and summarized the work of decades, of systematic and painstaking research. Later he discovered the wealth of shrimp in West Greenland waters and started another lucrative fishery, an achievement that earned him the nomination as Honorary Citizen of Christianshåb, the settlement in Disko Bay that became one of the centres of the shrimp fishery. He was in due course invested as Knight of the First Grade of the Order of the Dannebrog. He came to be known affectionately, in Greenland, as "Torsk" Hansen, and he was conspicuously welcome at the settlements in Greenland which he came to know so well. He was a master raconteur, and held his audiences spellbound and laughing with his memories of Greenland life. Stored up in his capacious memory was such wealth of Greenland lore and recent history as would have made most excellent reading had it ever been printed, but to our general misfortune he left that particular task till too late.

Much of the economic development of Greenland during the present century is based on the work of Adolf Jensen and Paul Hansen — quiet, persistent, unspectacular scientific work (like most scientific work) that made possible the rational development of the cod, halibut, char and shrimp resources during the climatic warming that caused a shift from seal-hunting to a fishery economy. And indeed, Paul Hansen dealt with the sea mammals as well, and the control of the seal hunting. A man of parts, and certainly for all seasons.

To add a personal note, my first contact with Paul Hansen was auditory rather than visual. His shout of welcome came over the waters of Disko Bay in 1936, from his motor boat "Umarissoq" to our little "Agpaliarsuk", long before he himself became visible, and we were in collaboration in various ways since that date. His bright and ebullient personality will be remembered by all his friends and colleagues for many years, in Canada as in his own Denmark and Greenland.

M. J. Dunbar