

Politics, Bureaucracy, and Arctic Archaeology in Canada, 1910–39

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ABSTRACT. Until the post-World War II period most of Canada's professional archaeologists and ethnologists were attached to the Anthropological Division of the National Museum in Ottawa, originally founded in 1910 as a branch of the Geological Survey. As they were federal employees, their scientific work was largely dependent on, and ultimately limited by, what politicians and senior bureaucrats deemed to be in the public interest. This paper considers some implications of this arrangement for one aspect of Anthropological Division activity before World War II—its involvement in arctic archaeology. While government personnel made a number of substantive contributions to what was then a developing field of research and scholarship, archival sources suggest that prevailing political and institutional conditions weighed against the division's continuing participation in northern fieldwork during these years. Instead, its role was effectively limited to encouraging and, on occasion, coordinating the research of American, British, and European archaeologists working on problems pertaining to the prehistory of the Canadian Arctic.

Key words: arctic archaeology, history of Canadian archaeology; National Museum of Canada

RÉSUMÉ. Jusqu'à la période qui a suivi la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la plupart des archéologues et ethnologues professionnels du Canada étaient rattachés au service d'anthropologie du Musée national du Canada à Ottawa, fondé à l'origine, en 1910, comme une branche de la Commission géologique du Canada. Vu leur statut d'employés fédéraux, leurs travaux scientifiques dépendaient largement de ce que les politiciens et les principaux bureaucrates jugeaient être d'intérêt public, et se trouvaient par conséquent limités. Cet article examine certaines retombées de cet état de fait en ce qui touche un aspect des activités du service d'anthropologie avant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, soit son engagement dans l'archéologie arctique. Bien que le personnel du gouvernement ait contribué de nombreuses fois et de façon appréciable à ce domaine de recherche et du savoir alors en développement, les sources d'archives suggèrent que la conjoncture politique et institutionnelle était défavorable, à cette époque, à la poursuite de la participation du service aux travaux de recherche sur le terrain dans le grand Nord. Son rôle se trouvait en fait plutôt limité à encourager et, à l'occasion, à coordonner la recherche des archéologues américains, britanniques et européens travaillant sur des questions traitant de la préhistoire de l'Arctique canadien.

Mots clés: archéologie arctique, histoire de l'archéologie canadienne, Musée national du Canada

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INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary in 1932, the Royal Society of Canada published a retrospective of the work of its five scientific and literary sections. In summarizing the state of archaeology, National Museum anthropologist Diamond Jenness made two fundamental observations: first, despite a record of research and publication on aboriginal cultures dating back to the mid 1800s, the field in Canada was still in its scientific and professional adolescence; and second, relatively more had been accomplished in the Arctic and Subarctic during the preceding twenty years than had been achieved throughout the rest of the country over a span three or four times as long. The success of northern research was all the more remarkable, in Jenness' estimation, since investigations began only in 1909 with Vilhjalmur Stefansson's preliminary reconnaissance of western arctic sites (Jenness, 1932a).

Jenness made no connection between his two observations, though connections exist. Among them is that the Dominion's all-too-few archaeologists were perpetually hard-pressed to obtain the organizational and financial support necessary to conduct systematic research and thereby to further their specialization's development at home. As it happened, between 1910 and 1939 nearly all the country's archaeologists and ethnologists were employees of the federal government, initially in the Geological Survey of Canada, then in the National Museum. This made the intellectual and logistical aspects of their scientific agenda contingent on what politicians and bureaucrats deemed to be in the public interest. In effect, a government policy that accorded little importance to anthropological work of any kind meant that survey and museum personnel found themselves on the sidelines all too often, while scientists from foreign institutions investigated what were then central problems in Canadian

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(and North American) prehistory and ethnology. The situation was especially acute in arctic archaeology, where American and Danish workers and ideas predominated until after World War II.

What follows is a brief examination of Geological Survey and National Museum involvement in arctic archaeology before the Second World War and some of the more conspicuous political and institutional factors that limited what government anthropologists actually accomplished in the period. Taken together, these factors provide context for readers whose interest in the history of archaeology, both in the North and elsewhere, favours analysis of theoretical and methodological issues and trends. They also illuminate other aspects of that history, notably the profession's painfully slow development in Canada to mid century, its intellectual and organizational connections with contemporary archaeology in the United States and Europe, and its relevance to national life.

GOVERNMENT ANTHROPOLOGY IN CANADA

Canadian anthropology reached a milestone in 1910 when R.W. Brock, director of the Geological Survey of Canada, brought Edward Sapir to Ottawa to take charge of the survey's newly formed Anthropological Division, the first state-supported research bureau in the British Empire and forebear of today's Museum of Civilization. This breakthrough came 25 years after a coalition of British and Canadian learned societies began lobbying for a publicly funded agency to survey the country's aboriginal peoples and cultures, and for a museum to display their artifacts. Despite popular support for the idea, sitting politicians remained unenthusiastic, favouring expenditure on industry and commerce, not on science. Their lone concession, an annual vote of \$500 to the Geological Survey for purchasing ethnographic specimens, was rescinded after only five years (1890–95), ostensibly for reasons of internal economy. All the while American and European institutions lavished money on research and collecting in Canada, carting off a wealth of artifacts (Cole, 1985; Avrith, 1986).

A rising tide of nationalism around the turn of the century boosted anthropology's fortunes. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Liberals engendered this mood with policies aimed at expanding Canadian economic and territorial interests westward and northward and at shoring up sovereignty. The Geological Survey played a leading part in this, its scientific activities increasingly devoted to the practicality of "rolling back [the country's] frontiers," mapping wilderness lands and waters, exploring for resources, and showing the flag where the Dominion's territorial claims were in dispute, as they then were in the Arctic (Zaslow, 1975:151; cf. Levere, 1993). In 1907, Interior Minister Clifford Sifton reinforced these priorities by reorganizing the survey; once an independent agency, it was now a branch of the newly created Department of Mines. The enabling legislation included ethnological work among the new department's responsibilities (Zaslow, 1975).

Incorporating ethnology (along with botany, palaeontology, and zoology) into the survey's mandate was meant to contribute to a "complete and exact knowledge" of Canada's natural history (Zaslow, 1975:241). The Victoria Memorial Museum, still on the drawing board at the time, was to serve as the repository of that knowledge and become the show-place of Canadian progress and modernity. On becoming survey director in 1908, Brock, a former geology professor, recommended that a separate anthropological division be established and an academically trained anthropologist put at its head to initiate countrywide research and to build a representative ethnological collection. In making the case, he appealed to his superiors' political and nationalist sensibilities, asserting that while displays of native artifacts make popular and instructive attractions, collecting to date had mainly benefitted foreign museums, leaving Canada poorer for the loss (GSC, 1909). He also spoke of the compelling need for timely research among peoples whose traditional cultures were rapidly disappearing. Investigations "must be undertaken at once or it will be too late," he argued; customary knowledge would be "lost forever, ... future generations of Canadians ... unable to obtain reliable data concerning the native races of their country" (GSC, 1910:8).

Armed with supporting resolutions from the Archaeological Society of America, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Royal Society of Canada, unequivocal evidence that "public opinion is awakening to the urgency, importance, and value of this work," Brock succeeded in rescuing anthropology from its former "spasmodic and secondary" state (GSC, 1911:7). The Anthropological Division's organization thus gave cause for optimism: government was committing the wherewithal to mount systematic and comprehensive research and elevating the science to professional standing into the bargain.

Within three years of its founding, the division boasted separate sections for archaeology, ethnology (including linguistics), and physical anthropology; a full-time staff of six; and no fewer than ten others hired on temporary contracts. Many had studied at British and American universities, members of the first generation of academically trained anthropologists. As research director, Sapir deployed fieldworkers from coast to coast, inaugurated publication of an anthropological series, and expanded in size and scope the holdings of ethnological and archaeological specimens. These artifacts, and the division itself, were housed in Ottawa's Victoria Memorial Museum, first opened to the public in 1911. Though conceived as a national museum, the Victoria Memorial was formally renamed the National Museum of Canada only 16 years after its establishment (Collins, 1928; Fenton, 1986).

Getting serious anthropological work off the ground was one thing; keeping it there, quite another. With a knowledgeable, sympathetic, and politically well-connected advocate in Brock, a man with friends among the Laurier Liberals and, after 1911, the Conservatives under Robert Borden, the Anthropological Division initially saw its share of the government's annual allocation for fieldwork grow steadily.

Annual reports show that by 1914–15, a total of 37 research parties had been mounted, several thousand artifacts added to the museum's holdings, and 20 field reports published under the survey imprint. Then the bubble burst.

Canada's first full year of world war brought cut-backs that severely curtailed all but essential scientific activities, that is, research pertaining to the discovery and development of strategic materials (Zaslow, 1975). Making matters worse, soon after his 1914 promotion to deputy minister, Brock resigned to take a deanship at the University of British Columbia. Anthropology felt his absence at once, but perhaps most keenly after wartime financial controls were finally lifted and the task of regrouping was at hand. His successor as deputy, another geologist named R.G. McConnell, was a man Sapir reckoned not "in the slightest degree interested in anthropology" (NMC: Sapir to Boas, 19 October 1916). Like many of his colleagues in the Mines bureaucracy, McConnell defined the department's mandate so narrowly as to barely tolerate activities not directly beneficial to the Dominion's economic well-being. Confirming Sapir's opinion of him, in 1917 he refused a division request to hire a new member on the grounds that anthropological work was "*purely scientific ... costing the Department over \$17,000 a year in salaries and a further amount, which I am endeavouring to make as small as possible, for field expenses*" (NAC: McConnell to Gallagher, 12 May 1917).

In keeping with its new role, the survey was formally separated from the Victoria Memorial Museum in 1920; each became a branch of the Mines Department. Yet little had actually changed: senior geologist-bureaucrats kept control of the museum's purse-strings and its scientific agenda. This was glaringly evident in the person of William Collins, a Precambrian specialist. When illness forced William McInnes, the reorganized museum's first director, to step aside after only a few months in the post, Collins added that job to his own as survey director, effectively re-annexing the museum in the process. He valued running a tight ship. And as he had little interest in promoting the work of the museum's scientific divisions, problems inevitably arose, including run-ins with anthropologists over research policy and priorities, budget, hiring, and even what constituted the appropriate content and language of published field reports (Richling, 1990).

After succeeding Sapir as division chief late in 1925, Jenness saw anthropology's lingering malaise as arising from the museum's lack of administrative independence. Collins, however, attributed the problem to its victims. In a published account of the museum's history, he observed that "besides having little need for scientific intercourse with the main body of geologists, mineralogists, and others," the anthropologists, palaeontologists, and biologists on the staff "had little or no knowledge of the traditions and customs of the Geological Survey." This legacy, he insinuated, engendered both pride and a "spirit of exclusiveness" (Collins, 1928:47). Translated into practice, this attitude meant that the survey's needs and interests invariably came first. Typical was the director's decision to reassign scarce lab space to the survey,

"practically destroy[ing] all further activities on the part of the archaeological section." With Collins' recent pronouncement about "traditions" in mind, Jenness observed that his protest of the decision was "not actuated by any feeling of hostility towards the Geological Survey. On the contrary I have the highest appreciation of its work. ... But I have an equally high appreciation of the work of the National Museum and see no reason why the two institutions should not advance together ... *helping and not crushing each other*" (NMC: Jenness to Collins, 2 February 1928). Like many other issues, this too was a lost cause. Little wonder, then, that over the next quarter-century staff vacancies went unfilled, funds for fieldwork and publication remained scarce, and what research was done fell under the intense scrutiny of the geologists-turned-bureaucrats who administered the survey and the museum, and effectively dictated the anthropological agenda through the entire interwar period.

The situation actually proved so unsatisfactory that Jenness resigned as chief over it in 1930, explaining to Deputy Minister Charles Camsell (yet another geologist) that "the National Museum of Canada, or at least the Division of Anthropology, can make no headway as long as it is subordinated to the Geological Survey" (NMC: 27 December 1930). Ironically, Collins became acting division chief too, serving until Jenness returned to the office seven years later.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA

Archaeology formed part of the Anthropological Division's plans from the beginning. In 1911, Sapir brought Boas's associate Harlan Smith to Ottawa from New York's American Museum of Natural History to head up a separate archaeological section, and Marius Barbeau, a newcomer himself, recruited David Boyle's protégé William Wintenberg as Smith's assistant in the same year. The two began preliminary investigations in southern Ontario at once, then worked eastward into the Maritimes over the next few seasons. In 1915 Smith bequeathed the eastern Canadian field to Wintenberg, returning to British Columbia where his own career had begun as a member of the Jesup Expedition of 1897–1901.

Smith and Wintenberg's work comprised the early stages of what was intended to be a full-scale archaeological survey of Canada. Archaeology was then widely regarded as a form of ethnology, the primary difference between them being the types of evidence each sought to uncover. Sapir thus viewed his associates' work as a supplement to the main ethnological survey, helping to define traits of each of the Dominion's culture areas, pinpointing the origins of diffused culture elements, and accounting for past population movements (Sapir, 1911; see also Boas, 1910). In practice, however, Sapir gave priority to working with native informants still conversant in indigenous ways, a preference that guided the deployment of personnel in the field. In short, like most of his contemporaries, he considered the chance for salvage ethnology fleeting while mistakenly assuming that the remnants of

past cultures remained safe, able to await examination in years to come (Jenness, 1932a; cf. Trigger, 1981).

Nowhere was this view more evident than in Sapir's recruitment of contract researchers, both before the war and after. Of the ten hired through 1915, for example, only one was employed in archaeological work: William Nickerson, a railroad employee who made surveys throughout southwestern Manitoba between 1912 and 1915 (Capes, 1963). Significantly, none was hired afterward. Apart from Wintemberg's superficial reconnoitring of Canadian National Railway mainlines in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in 1925, nothing further was done in the Prairies until after World War II. By and large, then, the division's ambitious archaeological survey of the country's provinces went unfinished in the period. Smith turned mainly to ethnological work in the decade before his retirement in 1937, and Wintemberg, slowed by failing health, carried on alone until his own retirement (and death) four years later.

ARCTIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Northern work, both archaeological and ethnological, suffered a roughly similar fate, though its history unfolded along different lines. Interestingly enough, Brock saw fieldwork among the Inuit as an "entering wedge" for anthropology's elevation to divisional status in the Geological Survey, and for commencement of a comprehensive research programme (Sapir, 1912:60). In 1908, he struck a deal with the American Museum, defraying some of its expenses in sending Stefansson and zoologist Rudolph Anderson into the western Canadian Arctic in return for a share of the expedition's ethnological results. Stefansson's reports (1912, 1914) were among the first the new division published after 1910. A second opportunity presented itself in 1913 in the form of a much larger expedition to the same region, again under Stefansson's command, but this time with Ottawa providing the funding and claiming all the rewards. Exploring for territory and asserting sovereignty, not promoting scientific knowledge of the North, motivated the Borden government's decision to support the voyage, the indefatigable Stefansson all but promising to find new land in the Beaufort Sea. Cobbled together in less than a year's time, the enterprise came under the general direction of the Naval Services ministry, while oversight of scientific operations, including anthropology, fell to the Geological Survey (Diubaldo, 1978; Levere, 1993). Although it is known today as the Canadian Arctic Expedition, the name given the expedition in the annual audited statements of expedition finances, "Cruise of the Northern Waters," makes evident the government's political and territorial interests in the venture.

Two anthropologists accompanied Stefansson northward, the French scholar Henri Beuchat, an associate of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, and New Zealander Diamond Jenness. During the first winter, Beuchat and ten others were lost after ice destroyed the expedition's main ship *Karluq* in the Chukchi Sea. Jenness carried on alone, completing three

seasons of pioneering ethnographic research, the first among North Slope Inupiat around Barrow, Alaska, then two with the Copper Inuit at Coronation Gulf, Northwest Territories (Barbeau, 1916; Richling, 1989). This resulted in numerous papers and monographs, including definitive reports on Copper Inuit society and material culture (Jenness, 1922, 1946). But in June of 1914, Jenness also excavated several late prehistoric (Thule) sites on Barter Island, west of Herschel Island, keeping detailed notes and collecting a few thousand artifacts from sixty house ruins. Despite Jenness' plans to publish the work, it remained unpublished (if not entirely forgotten) for over seventy years until Edwin Hall wrote it up from the original notebooks in Archaeological Survey of Canada files (Hall, 1987; Jenness, n.d.; S. Jenness, 1990). Among the earliest systematic excavations undertaken in the Arctic, and the first under Canadian government auspices, the Barter Island work instilled in Jenness an enduring interest in Eskimo prehistory. After joining the Anthropological Division full time in 1920 as ethnologist, he kept a hand in the field whenever possible, eventually contributing seminal papers on the Dorset and Old Bering Sea cultures (Jenness, 1925, 1928); assisting others' work on Canadian and Alaskan problems, which included confirming the Asiatic origins and eastward spread of Eskimo culture; and encouraging development of a definitive collection of arctic materials in Ottawa.

Sapir organized the division's research on a regional basis, assigning individual staff members responsibility for designated culture areas. Jenness naturally became the arctic specialist; E.W. Hawkes was the only other survey anthropologist of the time to study the Inuit, making a cursory ethnological investigation of the Labrador and Hudson Strait areas in 1914. Between 1920 and 1925, however, Jenness' energies were directed elsewhere, to fieldwork among northern Dene: first, two months with the Sarcee in 1921, then sixteen months with Carrier, Kaska, Sekani and Beaver Dene in 1923–24. We cannot discount Sapir's keen interest in working out Na-Dene linguistics as a motivation for sending his colleague in this direction. But the division's failure to recoup the level of funding and personnel enjoyed before World War I gave compelling reason to dispatch those few bodies that remained into areas still awaiting attention. That aside, Knud Rasmussen's ground-breaking Fifth Thule Expedition, a Danish venture begun in 1921, promised to yield important results in all branches of Canadian arctic anthropology, thus keeping the field very much alive. Moreover, an assortment of policemen and other government employees posted in the North periodically supplied the museum with archaeological and ethnological artifacts acquired from local Inuit. To gain some control over the collecting and, at the same time, obtain more accurate records, Jenness recommended that R.C.M.P. officers be encouraged to do the excavating; even with that, he observed, "I'm sure [Harlan] Smith would rather have the police dig them out than go himself!!!" (NMC: to Sapir, 13 November 1923). Soon afterward Sapir actually prepared a set of instructions for on-the-spot archaeologists, giving guidance on rudimentary excavation techniques, the location of probable sites, and so on

(NMC: Sapir to Bolton, 28 April 1925). Under the circumstances, then, the division's direct involvement in northern archaeology seemed to be on indefinite hold, its resort to makeshift methods having to suffice for the time being.

A singular development put the museum back into the business of arctic prehistory, however briefly, starting in 1924. This was Jenness' discovery of the previously unknown Dorset culture in materials contained in one of those informal collections, this one courtesy of L.T. Burwash (Jenness, 1925). His discovery came on the heels of Therkel Mathiassen's authoritative work (1927) on the prehistoric Thule culture. Jenness opened detailed correspondence with Mathiassen and his colleague Kaj Birket-Smith, both freshly returned to Copenhagen following their successful expedition with Rasmussen. Among other things, they debated the definitive attributes of Dorset itself, especially Jenness' contention that it predated Thule culture; attempted to work out the spatial boundaries and affinities of the two cultures; and speculated on the broader outline of northern culture sequences. Jenness also sounded them out on the prospect of collaborative research, as he later did northern specialists elsewhere. Beyond looking into the Dorset problem in the eastern Arctic, they also agreed on the immediate need to investigate the Bering Sea region, expecting to unearth remains of considerable antiquity there and, more importantly, definitive evidence of the Asiatic origins of Eskimoan culture (e.g., NMC: Birket-Smith to Jenness, 6 August 1925; Mathiassen to Jenness, 18 March 1926). The idea of a joint project with the Danes went nowhere, a lingering source of disappointment for Jenness. Yet he was willing to re-enter the field on his own, proposing fieldwork in northwestern Alaska and adjacent portions of Siberia in 1926, and then on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay a year or two later (NMC: Jenness to Bolton, 21 December 1925).

Given the tight bureaucratic rein the museum operated under at the time, it is surprising that the proposed work in Alaska received authorization at all. Quite apart from the Anthropological Division's perennial difficulties in wresting funds from government coffers, there was also the matter of a museum policy that ostensibly limited research and collection activity to Canadian subjects and Canadian territory. The few exceptions—Barbeau's 1911–12 work among Oklahoma Wyandots, for example, and Jenness' proposed Bering Sea project—at least had the virtue of throwing light on otherwise Canadian problems. The policy succeeded in keeping division anthropologists close to home, yet Canada itself remained wide open for foreign researchers, particularly those from south of the border who found the Dominion “a splendid collecting field,” much as their predecessors had before the turn of the century (NMC: Jenness to Collins, 31 May 1926; Cole, 1985). Not until the mid twenties were regulations adopted that required foreign scientists to obtain permits before conducting excavations in the Northwest Territories and controlled the export of artifacts (e.g., Canada. Department of Interior, 1926, 1930).

That permission for the Bering Sea trip was given at all may have had something to do with Jenness' coincidental

promotion to division chief just months before, although he had no plans for a major shift in research emphasis at the time. In fact, Jenness chose not to institute any changes in the programme his predecessor had laid out fifteen years before, even commenting to Mathiassen that the coming arctic sojourn was likely to be his last for some time because of an earlier arrangement with Sapir to work among Dene in the lower Mackenzie valley (NMC: 21 January 1926). Still, he never wavered in his opinion that the origins and development of Inuit culture were central problems in North American ethnology, and therefore endeavoured, with limited success, to keep the division (and himself) active in the field throughout his tenure at the museum. “If I could divide myself into two persons,” he confessed to O.W. Geist, an Alaskan colleague, “one of them would give his whole time to Eskimo archaeology and ethnology. As it is, I have been forced ... to devote all my efforts to ... our Indian tribes [while] my archaeological collections from the Bering Sea ... [remain] untouched” (NMC: 23 August 1934).

On another level, we should not discount the possibility of genuine interest on the part of museum officials to see Canadian science stake its claim in a potentially high-profile field: hunting for remains of the earliest New World peoples. As it happened, the Bering Sea coast was just then becoming interesting to American anthropologists, adding a competitive, international dimension as well. The Smithsonian sent physical anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička northward in 1926 to look for osteological evidence of the Old World origins of Indian populations and Henry Collins two years later to begin archaeological work on St. Lawrence Island. “... there must surely be something lurking under the soil” up there, Jenness told Sapir, “traces of your Sinitic-Athabascans, perhaps” (NMC: 26 April 1926). What was lurking there came to be known as Old Bering Sea culture, first identified in about 3000 artifacts Jenness collected at Cape Prince of Wales and on Little Diomedede Island, then described more fully in subsequent research by Collins. Granted permission by Moscow to work on the Siberian shore, Jenness elected not to cross the strait because the Russians insisted on retaining everything he unearthed (NMC: Jenness to Birket-Smith, 23 December 1926). While failing to confirm ancient migrations between the two continents, Jenness' original findings not only recognized the likelihood of such movements, but also pushed the horizon of arctic occupations much earlier than the presumed time frame of Mathiassen's Thule tradition (Jenness, 1928; Morrison, 1991; NMC: Jenness to Birket-Smith, 23 December 1926).

Despite its obvious scientific merit, the Anthropological Division's renewed involvement in northern prehistory faltered as it became enmeshed in layer upon layer of politics. At the museum, director W.H. Collins favoured a multidisciplinary approach to the study of Inuit origins: he engaged specialists in biology, geology, and other fields to investigate environmental as well as cultural aspects of the problem, particularly in their Pleistocene context. Initiating the plan, the museum dispatched two Danish biologists, Alf and Robert Porsild, to study botanical aspects of the land

bridge question in the same season it sent Jenness to the region (NMC: Jenness to Kidder, 5 November 1926). Forward-thinking, perhaps, but the lasting effect of the approach was to keep archaeology from asserting a prior claim on research funding, a result borne out in the museum's nine-year absence from arctic fieldwork, in or outside the country, beginning in 1926.

On a different front, nationalism masquerading as scientific territorialism also played a hand in scuttling the division's northern research. In the months following his return from the Bering Sea, Jenness began corresponding with archaeologist A.V. Kidder, then with the National Research Council in Washington, and with Hrdlička. As it had been earlier with the Danes, the main subject was cooperation, something all three recognized as imperative, given the amount of work needing to be done, the complex logistics of arctic fieldwork, the scarcity of trained archaeologists, and the even greater scarcity of funds to carry on sustained research. At a National Research Council meeting, Hrdlička proposed establishing a special Prehistoric Migrations into America Committee to coordinate current and proposed studies and share results.

While agreeing in principle, Jenness felt compelled to wade into the ticklish waters of national interest, that is, the interest individual scientists and their home institutions inevitably have in controlling work done on their home turf. He described the practice of keeping within "mandated regions" to be little more than an "unwritten rule," yet one that "cannot be construed too rigidly" given the geographic dimensions of the problem under study and the small number of qualified researchers to take it on. Ever the realist, especially in view of the Smithsonian's inordinate influence, he still cautioned Kidder that "... the rule should never be infringed without good reason, to avoid international misunderstanding and ill-will" (NMC: 5 November 1926). Putting the point even more bluntly, he explained to Hrdlička that "... jealousy and suspicion nearly always arise" when two institutions or countries enter into a joint scientific project, one or the other convinced that "the other is getting most of the glory or an undue share of the specimens" (NMC: 19 October 1926). The best if not the safest route to take, in his estimation, was for each country to have priority in its own backyard while sharing results and steering clear of unnecessary duplication of effort.

All that said, Jenness could barely disregard the prospect of his own research plans being sunk by a combination of growing ambition south of the border and wishy-washy support from the museum. He confided in Birket-Smith that "... the Americans are just beginning to realize the importance of archaeological work in Alaska now that their attention has been called to it by outsiders and they wish to have a finger or perhaps their whole hand in the pie" (NMC: 23 December 1926). Hoping to avoid needless misunderstanding or worse, Jenness thought it best to refrain from going back to the region unless explicitly invited there by the Smithsonian or another American institution. At the same time, he urged his Danish colleagues to be no less circum-

spect, making sure to establish cooperative ties with American anthropologists before undertaking fieldwork in the all-important Alaskan Arctic (NMC: to Mathiassen, 6 November 1926).

As luck would have it, three months after offering this advice Jenness received just such an invitation: an offer to lead a United States expedition to St. Lawrence Island. Hrdlička's reconnaissance the preceding summer had turned up cultural materials roughly similar to Jenness' Bering Straits finds, encouraging the Smithsonian, with National Geographic Society backing, to undertake a more thorough investigation of the area generally, and of Old Bering Sea culture in particular (Giddings, 1967). Acting as an intermediary for the two scientific organizations, Kidder approached Jenness with the proposition. Making much of the New Zealander's previous arctic experience, Kidder suggested that his leadership and expertise, at least in the initial stages of the project, would not only increase the chances of ultimate success, but would also advance the cause of international cooperation which the two had already corresponded about but which seemed so hard to achieve (NMC: 1 March 1927).

The opportunity to work for the Smithsonian, even temporarily, was unquestionably appealing; Jenness wasted no time at all in accepting the proposal. Within three days he wrote back to Washington that his employer was prepared to arrange a six-month secondment, ample time for him to teach northern excavation techniques and general problems in Eskimo archaeology to the apprentice fieldworkers who would accompany him to Alaska. He even took the occasion to suggest Norton Sound as an alternative field site, at least for the first season. This was the area Jenness (rightly) suspected marked an important linguistic boundary between Alaskan Yupik and Inupik speakers; it therefore might also yield profitable evidence bearing on the development of prehistoric cultural patterns (NMC: to Kidder, 4 March 1927; see also Jenness 1928; Woodbury, 1984). Quite unexpectedly, however, the project foundered. Clearly embarrassed by what had happened, Kidder explained that the National Geographic Society had withdrawn its backing because of a trivial jurisdictional dispute with the Smithsonian, though undoubtedly there were other "underlying frictions" between the two (NMC: to Jenness, 21 March 1927). In the end, Henry Collins went north for the Smithsonian in 1928 to start a scaled-down but highly profitable archaeological project on St. Lawrence and the nearby Penuk islands. Jenness, on the other hand, quickly made other plans, organizing an archaeological survey of north-central Newfoundland.

While the decision to go to Newfoundland was made on short notice, Jenness appears to have been thinking about the place for some time. "Next to Alaska," he wrote to St. John's amateur archaeologist A.J. Bayly, "the most important region to investigate, as far as the Eskimos are concerned, is the east and west coast of the Labrador Peninsula, the north shore of Newfoundland and the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence" (NMC: 26 April 1927). He expected to find clues to numerous ethnological problems here, including possible Beothuk-Algonkian and Beothuk-Eskimo affinities and the

relationship of regional developments to better-known cultural sequences to the west. By chance, the American W.D. Strong planned to accompany the second Rawson-MacMillan Field Museum Expedition to Labrador that same summer, intending to do ethnographic work among the Davis Inlet band Innu. Hoping to dissuade the young anthropologist from the formidable task of tracking the Indians down in their interior winter camps, Jenness suggested that he look into archaeology instead: “I really think the best work you can do is to untangle the relationship between the two old cultures, Cape Dorset and Thule ...” (NMC: 5 April 1927). Strong heeded the advice, at least partially, giving particular attention to house sites in the vicinity of Nain, attempting to sort out prehistoric Eskimo and Indian traits, and identifying Dorset materials (NMC: Strong to Jenness, 28 November 1928; Strong, 1930).

Jenness described his own Newfoundland fieldwork as only moderately productive, accounting for about 130 specimens, including a female skeleton from the Exploits Bay area. “The old red Indians there have left very little for the archaeologist,” he complained to Mathiassen (NMC: 21 October 1927). Quite unexpectedly, though, he also turned up evidence of Dorset-type harpoon heads, sufficient, to his mind, to warrant a more thorough investigation aimed at establishing the full extent of prehistoric Eskimo occupations and Indian-Eskimo contacts in this region (NMC: Jenness to English, 27 August 1927; to Mathiassen, 21 October 1927; Jenness, 1929).

Meanwhile, after spending the previous two field seasons along the north shore of the Gulf in Québec-Labrador, Wintenberg moved on to Newfoundland in 1929 to follow up on these earlier findings. Concentrating on the western shore of the Northern Peninsula between Bonne Bay and Port Saunders, he succeeded in verifying the Dorset presence that Jenness supposed was there, and added credence to the still-unresolved argument that Dorset preceded Thule in the eastern Arctic (Wintenberg, 1939, 1940).

Having made reasonable progress with elucidating the Dorset problem on the southern front, the Anthropological Division as yet had done little to investigate it in the far North. To that end Jenness tried to persuade either Birket-Smith or Mathiassen to go to the Hudson Strait region in 1929–30 for the museum, offering the chance of a permanent position later on, since several vacancies had gone unfilled for some time. “With the [government] ship going north every year to supply the police posts,” he encouraged Mathiassen, “you would be able to do all the Eskimo work you wanted” (NMC: 10 December 1928). Of the two, Mathiassen expressed the greatest interest, even going so far as to inquire about citizenship requirements and immigration procedures. In the end, though, he turned the offer down, having received long-awaited news that the Danish government had agreed to sponsor him in making an archaeological survey of Greenland. Jenness was understandably discouraged about getting this necessary phase of investigations under way at long last; “... where shall I find a competent man to take up Arctic work, for as you know I am growing old and decrepit myself,

and in any case am a mere dilettante compared with you and Birket-Smith” (NMC: to Mathiassen, 27 December 1928).

His self-deprecating statements aside, Jenness had little leeway in the matter, since in early 1928 the government commissioned him to prepare two authoritative texts on the Dominion’s aboriginal peoples, one earmarked for publication as a museum monograph, the other as part of a multi-volume *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (Jenness, 1930, 1932b). Apart from interrupting the archaeological work he was then engaged in—work that included writing up the Barter Island material and doing a fuller examination of Old Bering Sea, neither ever completed—the responsibility for finishing what was to become the classic *Indians of Canada* was daunting: “It is causing me all kinds of trouble for I am not qualified to write it, nor I think is anybody else. The worst of it is [the manuscripts] are supposed to be finished inside of sixteen or eighteen months and the task really requires about ten years” (NMC: to Birket-Smith, 13 January 1928). Other work suffered, too; in fact, the only fieldwork Jenness was able to do over the next eight years was a brief, seven-week stint among the Parry Sound Ojibwa. The textbook, and then the economic emergency of the Great Depression, saw to that.

The height of the Depression brought anthropological research and publication to a virtual standstill. Division personnel were mostly stranded behind their desks, as money had vanished for all but the most essential—that is, economically useful—projects (NMC: Collins to Grant, 4 May 1931). Yet northern archaeology was not entirely abandoned in these otherwise bleak years. With Smith on the verge of retirement (and having forsaken field archaeology for other projects years before) and Wintenberg soldiering on despite his health, Jenness arranged a promotion of sorts for Douglas Leechman, originally hired as a curatorial assistant in 1923 and the only one of the division’s members not assigned scientific duties outside the museum. Despite the general ban on fieldwork, Leechman was able to reach the eastern Arctic at relatively little expense, travelling northward aboard the government’s regular patrol vessel in the summers of 1934–36. This resulted in an exploratory survey of coastal areas between Labrador and Ellesmere Island, and subsequent excavations of Thule and Dorset sites on the Button Islands, in Arctic Bay, and elsewhere (Leechman, 1943; NMC: Jenness to Collins, 25 January 1927). It was not quite the intensive investigation Jenness had lobbied for, but in the circumstances Leechman’s work had the virtue of keeping attention focused on one of the day’s more important ethnological problems.

To his credit, Jenness continued to agitate on behalf of arctic archaeology throughout the dismal Depression years and up to the outbreak of World War II, trying to rebuild the division’s depleted staff and, with some success, to persuade up-and-coming researchers to investigate Dorset and other problems throughout the eastern Arctic. With academic anthropology barely established in any of the country’s universities, most of his recruiting efforts were necessarily aimed at the United States and Europe. Among the better-known specialists he courted on behalf of the museum, or simply

encouraged in the interests of northern science, were Junius Bird, Henry Collins, Frederica de Laguna, and George Quimby, all Americans, and an Englishman, Graham Rowley. Though unable to provide any of these people with financial or logistical support for fieldwork or with a publishing outlet for their reports, the Anthropological Division still made its considerable arctic collections available to them and to other visiting scholars, and attempted to coordinate the various activities of foreign institutions working in the Canadian Arctic during the thirties.

CONCLUSION

Most of Canada's archaeologists and ethnologists worked for the federal government before World War II, but they did so under difficult conditions dictated by the interests and priorities of politicians and bureaucrats. For a short time after the founding of the Geological Survey's Anthropological Division in 1910, ample resources were available to hire personnel, conduct wide-ranging fieldwork, publish reports, and collect artifacts for study and public display in what eventually became the National Museum of Canada. But following the lifting of wartime economic restraints in 1918, the division was unable to recover its previous level of funding and failed to regain any more than a modicum of control over its own scientific programme. These proved to be persistent problems, largely political in nature, that resulted in a steady decline in the number of anthropologists employed at the National Museum, and in the long-term erosion of their Dominion-wide research programme. Twenty-seven years after R.W. Brock recruited Edward Sapir to implement that programme, only 15 out of the 50 aboriginal cultures initially slated for ethnological investigation had actually been studied (NMC: Jenness to Lynch, 3 April 1937). Similarly, the companion archaeological survey of the provinces remained far from complete. As for work in arctic prehistory, despite great ambitions and a few notable accomplishments, the surface had barely been scratched.

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