

### **New quarters of the New York Office**

Some time ago the Director of the American Geographical Society advised me that owing to the expanding activities of the Society he was reluctantly forced to ask the Institute to relinquish the space that the New York Office had occupied in the Society's building since 1947. Every effort was made to secure accommodation which would answer most effectively the administrative needs of the New York Office and at the same time provide an association with an organization with parallel interests to those of the Institute.

By great good fortune this has been met through the hospitality of the New York Academy of Sciences. The address of the new quarters in the Academy's building is c/o New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd Street, New York 21, N.Y.

WALTER A. WOOD  
*Director, New York Office*

### **Visit of N. O. Christensen**

Kontorchef N. O. Christensen (previously acting Landsfoged for North Greenland) visited the Montreal Office of the Institute during the last week in May. He had flown directly from Greenland to Canada and will be travelling on the *C. D. Howe* this summer as the guest of the Northwest Territories Administration. He will thus have an opportunity to study administrative practices in the Eastern Canadian Arctic, and in return the Canadian authorities will be able to learn from him at first hand many of the administrative and native welfare practices in Greenland, where there has been so much change in recent years. His visit was made possible by a United Nations Fellowship.

## **NORTHERN NEWS**

### **Discovery of Russian hydrographic bottles and barges off west Greenland**

Dr. Trevor Lloyd, who was in Greenland during the summer of 1951, has sent the following information on Russian hydrographic bottles and barges found off the west coast of Greenland.

On 16 June 1951 a Greenland fisherman from Narssalik, between Frederikshaab and Ivigtut, found a Russian hydrographic bottle floating in the sea. He broke the glass and turned the paper over to the Administration. The paper was a typical hydrographic record, and had printed instructions in Russian, English, and Norwegian to return the paper to the Arctic Institute of the U.S.S.R. in Leningrad, with a statement of the date and place of finding. There was no record of where the bottle had been released, but the paper bore a statement that it was used to study the movement of ice and so was presumably of arctic origin and had drifted down the east coast of Greenland and had then been caught in the West Greenland Current.

In *Grønlandsposten* for 16 January 1952 there is an account of the finding of another Russian bottle. On 14 August 1951 the fisherman Ezekias Møller found some driftwood a little east of Napassok, to the north of Godthaab, which he took home with him. In January of 1952, when about to chop the wood up, he found a hole in it stopped with a plug, and inside a glass container. The paper inside the container was similar to that found in June 1951. The account in *Grønlandsposten* adds the information that a similar container was found at Prøven in 1937 and that the Arctic Institute of the U.S.S.R. reported that it had been released in September 1932. Therefore it is probable that the two bottles found in 1951 were put into the sea around 1946.

A more interesting find is that of two wooden barges floating in Davis Strait. These were marked with Russian names and dates carved in the gunwales, and were brought ashore at Islandsdalen, a "suburb" of Godthaab, about 1949. Unfortunately the barges were cut up and

used for fuel. Dr. Lloyd could not find any pieces on the beach in July 1951, nor any record of the names or dates carved on the barges, though he heard 1942 mentioned as probably the correct date. This information about the barges came from the Administration and was widely known to the local fishermen, so it is undoubtedly true. The barges were presumably river barges used on the Siberian rivers; these are generally very large and heavy in construction. In the spring the ice on these rivers breaks up with enormous force and the two barges were probably carried out at this time of year. Seven years would seem a reasonable period for the drift by way of the east Greenland coast.

Dr. Lloyd adds the comment that it is not unusual to find large amounts of driftwood of Siberian origin on the southeast coast of Greenland. When visiting the Rev. Otto Rosing at Egedesminde in 1951, he was told that "much of my furniture came from Russia"—a reference to Otto Rosing's many years at Angmagssalik where the best lumber comes from the sea. Firewood probably of Siberian origin is used in outposts a few miles south of Godthaab in west Greenland.

### **The Seismic Observatory at Resolute Bay<sup>1</sup>**

In 1948 a survey made at Resolute Bay by the Dominion Observatory gave a favourable report on the feasibility of establishing and operating a seismological observatory in the severe arctic climate. The most important prerequisite, bedrock, for receiving seismic radiation, was discovered near a small river one thousand feet south of the station. Plans were accordingly laid to bring the station into operation.

A rigorous field test of equipment was carried out on the Experimental Farm in Ottawa during the winter of 1949-50; in July of 1950 P. C. Bremner and R. E. Andrews, the latter a student at the

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted from the *Arctic Circular*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1952) pp. 9-10. Published by permission of the Director-General of Scientific Services, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa.

University of Toronto, flew north to establish the station. The detecting seismometers were placed on bedrock and enclosed in a small building which was then banked with gravel to provide temperature control and reduce the effects of strong winds. The building can only be entered through a trap-door level with the ground, and two one-hundred watt light bulbs provide sufficient heat to keep the vault at a comfortable working temperature during the coldest season of the year. Several cables lead from the building housing the detecting seismometers to the recorder building located in the weather station. The recording apparatus is set up on steel tables which are anchored in the permanently frozen ground and housed in a specially designed double-walled prefabricated building made by the Tower Construction Company. Within two months after the seismic crew landed at Resolute important data on distant earthquakes were being radioed to the south. P. C. Bremner remained in charge of the Observatory during 1951 but R. E. Andrews recently returned to Resolute to operate the station during 1952.

While there has been little indication that the Eastern Arctic Islands are seismic, few days pass that an earthquake is not recorded at the Resolute Bay Observatory. Earth tremors from Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, and occasionally from northern Siberia will often shake the seismometers so violently that only the first shock wave is well recorded. The remainder of the record may be obscured as the result of the intense ground movement too small for detection by human senses but violent enough to destroy the usefulness of the seismometer. The arrival time of the first shock wave is of great importance and this information is radioed at once to Ottawa, then to Washington where data are collected from all over the world. The United States Coast and Geodetic Survey uses this information to determine the location, and depth in the earth, of the earthquake and sends its results to stations studying these phenomena.

Today, with the experimental stage of the installation almost over, Resolute is

ranked as one of the leading stations in the world. It is located in such a position that seismologists may study, in conjunction with other observatories, the geological structure beneath the Arctic Ocean, the Bering Sea, and North America. It may prove valuable in solving the mystery of microseisms, a periodic ground disturbance associated with the

passage of cold fronts and more spectacularly with the movement of storms at sea. Much work is needed to improve the instrumentation to carry out this research but the most difficult stage has been completed. There are few stations which today have the great opportunities offered to seismologists in charge of the Resolute Bay Observatory.

P. C. BREMNER

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

I read with interest Dr. Jacques Rousseau's review of 'Terre Stérile' by Jean Michéa in the September issue of *Arctic*, which reached me on Wednesday last. Dr. Rousseau states that Michéa mentions that syllabic Eskimo was invented by the Moravian missionaries of the Labrador Coast, who taught it to the Naskapi Indians and to the local Eskimo. Dr. Rousseau is correct in suggesting that Michéa is incorrect in this statement. In the first place the Moravian missionaries never worked among the Naskapi Indians on this Coast and secondly the Mission has always used Roman characters in its Eskimo publications both here and in Greenland.

Jens Haven, the first missionary of our Church here in Nain, who came here in the year 1771 had formerly been a mis-

sionary in Greenland and I have in my possession at Nain a New Testament in the language of the Greenland Eskimo translated by Paul Egede and printed in 1766. Also I have a handwritten Catechismusiorvik—that is an Eskimo Catechism—written in the year 1769. It is inconceivable that Moravians having access to the Scriptures in the Eskimo language should go to the trouble to invent a new form of writing. The Naskapi Indians of this Coast use syllabic but I have no knowledge of when they first began to use it, but would think that it was probably at some fairly late date.

(REV.) F. W. PEACOCK,  
Superintendent of Moravian  
Missions in Labrador,  
Nain,  
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