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ESKIMO ADMINISTRATION: IV. GREENLAND

By

DIAMOND JENNESS

PUBLISHED MAY 1967

THE ARCTIC INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA

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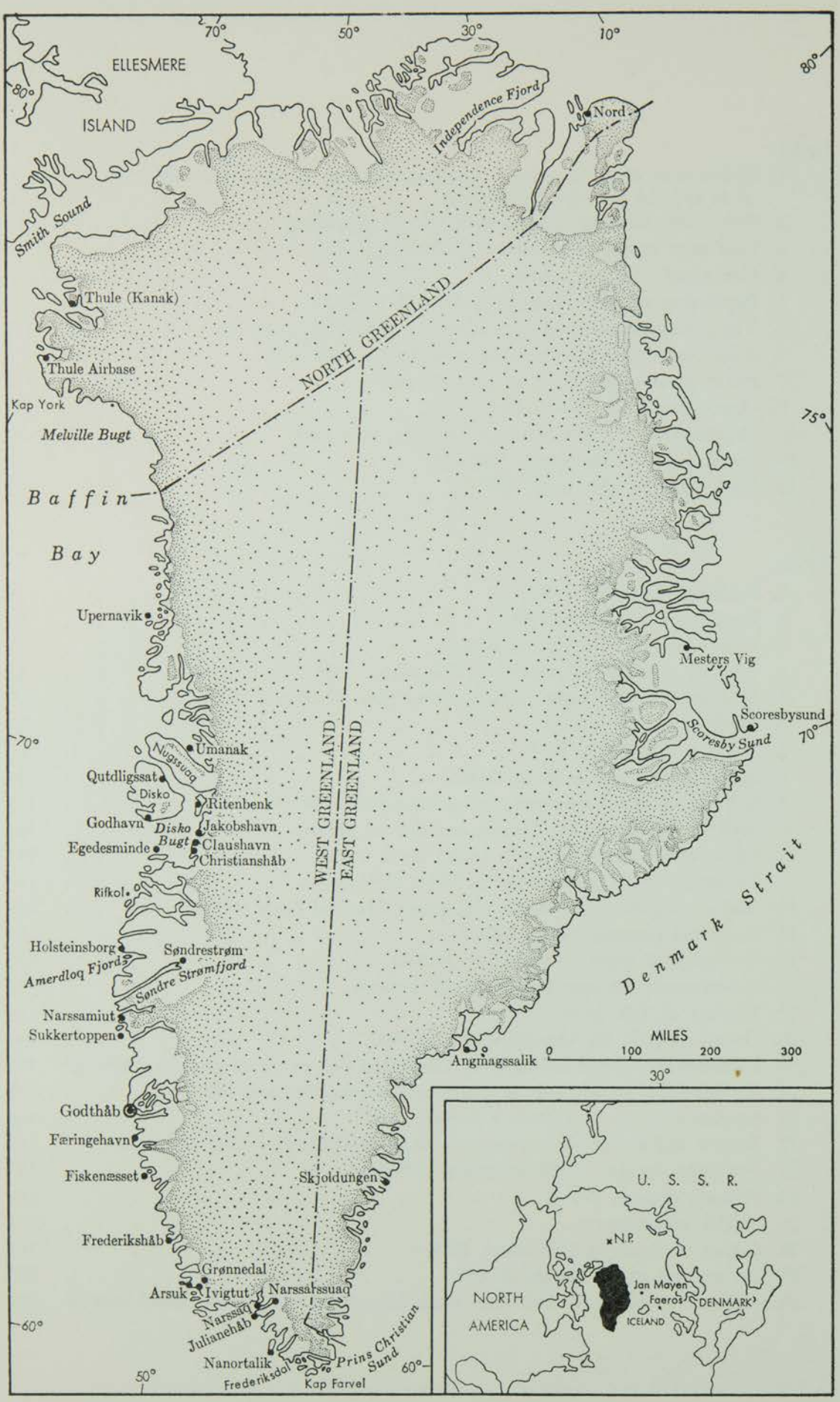

Fig. 1. Sketch-map of present-day Greenland, showing its three administrative districts and the principal settlements.

ESKIMO ADMINISTRATION: IV. GREENLAND

Diamond Jenness

PREFACE

During the last two centuries Denmark, which counts as one of the smaller nations in today's world, has successfully lighted the torch of human progress, and kept it burning brightly, in distant Greenland, that once-benighted island near the top of our globe.

In this report, the fourth of a series on Eskimo Administrations, I have endeavoured to trace the island's evolution since the early eighteenth century, when its inhabitants were primitive savages different in appearance, manners, and speech from all other races of mankind, into a province of Denmark, peopled by an industrious fisher-folk who maintain close contact with the civilized world, and day and night transmit valuable weather data to guide the farmers of northern Europe and the ships and aircraft that commute across the Atlantic. Greenland has made, and taken its toll of, some of Denmark's greatest men, Hans Egede in the eighteenth century, Hinrik Rink in the nineteenth, Knud Rasmussen in the first half of this century, and in our own days the late geologist Lauge Koch. These men, and others, gave their lives to Greenland, but they have made the whole world their debtors.

Eskimos have been living for at least two thousand years on the Siberian shore of the Bering Sea and Bering Strait, but their number, estimated at perhaps 4,000 in the seventeenth century, had fallen by 1959 to only 1,111. I have omitted them from these studies because I can neither read the Russian language nor have access to authoritative sources of information concerning their life under Soviet rule.

It remains for me now to thank all the friends, old and new, who have helped me to compile this Greenland study, and to beg their indulgence for many errors that have doubtless crept into its pages through my inability to read the vast literature in Danish. So many are these friends that I can mention, alas, only a few.

First comes Dr. Helge Larsen, Director of the Ethnological Collections in Denmark's National Museum, who shepherded me throughout my investigations in Copenhagen and Greenland during the summer of 1964, arranged for me a comprehensive tour to nearly all the main settlements on Greenland's west coast, and at a critical moment rescued me from absent-mindedly missing my Greenland aircraft. Denmark's Minister for Greenland, Mr. Michael Gam, kindly allowed me the use of an office in the Greenland Building in Copenhagen, where his senior officials, particularly Mr. Mads Lidegaard, head of the

educational branch of the Greenland Ministry, Mr. Claus Bornemann, who today heads the secretariat which is putting flesh and blood into Denmark's new ten-year program for Greenland, and Mr. Christian Jensen, chief of the Ministry's economic branch, spent many patient hours answering my enquiries and loading my desk with mountains of study material, published and unpublished. Greenland's wartime governor, and later Deputy Minister of the Greenland Ministry in Copenhagen, Mr. Eske Brun, and the present governor, Mr. N. O. Christensen, let me draw upon their vast experience and knowledge: the latter provided me with an office alongside his own in Godthåb, and detailed a temporary legal member of his staff, Mr. Peter Preben Hansen, to unravel for me some of the intricacies of Greenland's new Criminal Code. Others whom I cannot omit are Dr. Poul Hansen, the authority on Greenland's fisheries, and three old friends, Mr. Aage Bugge, formerly Dean of Greenland, Dr. Eric Holtved, Professor of Eskimology in the University of Copenhagen, and Dr. Erling Porsild, Chief Botanist of Canada's National Museum.

Finally, I should express my great debt to Mr. Victor Valentine, until recently Chief of the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in Ottawa, who persuaded me to undertake this study of Eskimo administrations and throughout the five years that task has demanded gave me his unfailing support; also to Mrs. W. E. Strong, the former Librarian of the same department, who never wearied of searching out books and references for me, however exacting the task.

DIAMOND JENNESS

Ottawa, September, 1965.

CHAPTER 1

The struggle for sovereignty: 1721–75

Twenty centuries before the Christian era, when the Old World was still struggling upward from savagery to barbarism and only a few peoples in the Middle and Far East had acquired the rudiments of civilization, small bands of Eskimos were wandering over Canada's Hudson Bay region and along the western shore of Greenland that faces Canada across Davis Strait. Three thousand years later, around A.D. 1000, Icelandic farmers whom Erik the Red had just settled in southwest Greenland discovered stone implements and other traces of earlier inhabitants; but not until they had occupied the coast undisturbed for over two centuries did they encounter living people, Eskimos who in small bands were pressing down on them, not from the east whence they themselves had come, but from the north. These Skraelings, as the colonists called them, were a stone-age people like the first inhabitants of Greenland, but they belonged to a different branch of the Eskimo race, having but recently trekked from a homeland in northern Alaska four thousand miles away across the Arctic. Because they possessed great skill in hunting the big sea mammals —whales, walrus, and seals—as well as the caribou and muskoxen on the land, they throve in Greenland's game-rich environment; but the Norse farmers south of them languished, for the climate slowly deteriorated, their herds of cattle and flocks of sheep dwindled, and their kinsmen in northern Europe, ravaged by wars and famines and the Black Death, were unable to send them any help. Early in the fifteenth century Greenland's tenuous connections with Iceland and Scandinavia snapped: Old World navigators forgot the route to the icy land across the stormy Atlantic, and its Norse colonists disappeared from view amid a fog of legends that mingled genuine traditions with myths.[1] When at last, in 1578, the Englishman Martin Frobisher forced his way into Davis Strait and landed on Greenland's west coast he found no sign of Europeans: the only visible inhabitants were Eskimos.

After Frobisher's voyage Basque fishing and whaling vessels began to frequent the waters of Davis Strait and to draw in their wake ships from

[1]Sveistrup has suggested an economic explanation for the severance of communications. He writes: "This navigation, however, ceased towards the close of the Middle Ages, chiefly, it is to be supposed, because the expeditions in question no longer proved profitable. The reason for this was presumably a change in the relations of prices, with the easier renewal of supplies for the world market from other countries. A more intensive trade communication had presumably sprung up between western Europe and Russia, from where furs were produced in such quantities that the prices fell, and the dangerous navigation of South Greenland no longer yielded any profit." (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 41).

England, Norway, and Holland. Many of these vessels, particularly from Holland, entered west Greenland's fiords and traded with its savage inhabitants, bartering metal goods, cloth, and beads for blubber, whalebone, and the skins of seals and foxes.[1] Reports of their activities reminded two successive Danish-Norwegian kings (for at that period Denmark and Norway were united into one kingdom) that their predecessors had exercised a trade monopoly over the ancient Norse colony in Greenland,[2] and they decided to search for descendants of those Norsemen and re-impose their authority over the island. The expeditions they sent out, however, encountered Eskimos only, and the conviction gained ground that the colonists had perished without trace.

Nevertheless, the possibility that a few survivors might still be struggling to retain a foothold in some unexplored part of Greenland fired the imagination and aroused the piety of a young Norwegian clergyman, Hans Egede, who petitioned the authorities for help in reaching the island and carrying to his lost countrymen the consolations of the Christian faith. For many years his petitions went unheeded, and a less obstinate man would have lost hope; but, encouraged by a remarkable wife, he renewed his petitions again and again, urging that even though every Norse settler might have perished, it was still Denmark's duty to gather the savage Eskimos into the Christian fold. In the end he won the support of some Bergen merchants, who formed a company to revive their city's ancient trade with Greenland and instructed Egede to plant a settlement on the island.

Egede sailed from Bergen in 1721, armed by King Frederik IV with a Royal Letter of Appointment as Greenland's clergyman and accompanied by his wife, their four children, and twenty-one others.[3] Guided by a Dutch seaman who knew the coastline, he founded a trading and mission station near the present Godthåb, at that time a wintering place for a considerable number of Eskimos, today (1964) the capital of Greenland with a population of approximately 4,000.

Winter closed in. Egede settled down to learn the Eskimo language, which no one had studied before him, and he attempted to wean the natives from their ancient superstitions by instilling into their minds the rudiments of Christianity. As leader of the Danish colony and the king's official missionary to Greenland he assumed for himself the authority of a governor and demanded implicit obedience from the natives in his vicinity, dealing rather high-handedly with some of them, especially their shamans or medicine-men. Slowly, however, he won their confidence, and his mission gathered strength.

[1] "The places where the Dutch set up their 'shops' were situated in the area between lat. 65° and 70°, and here they had their harbours, *viz.* the populous Narssamiut, Nipisat, Amerdloq, Isortoq, the centres of the whale-fishery, Rifkol, a dangerous neighbourhood where many Dutch vessels had been wrecked, and Rode-Bay with Makelyk Oud (Jacobshavn). How widely the bartering of the Dutch spread along the west coast appears from a report, made in 1729 by an assistant trader, of an expedition to South Fiske Fiord (Fiskernæsset) with a 'Dutch' harbour from the olden times. Everywhere there was abundance of Dutch merchandise; in one house, only, a dozen of brass kettles of different kinds . . . In 1729 five Dutch vessels left Nûk (Godthaab) with heavy cargoes." (Bobé, 1929, pp. 84–5). Cf. Garde, 1929, pp. 226–7.

[2] In 1327 the Greenland Norsemen, who were accustomed to pay their tithes to the Danish-Norwegian king in walrus and narwhal tusks, sent to the Pope in Rome 130 stone of walrus tusks as Peter's pence and a contribution to the crusades (Bobé, 1929, p. 79). European bishops eagerly bought up the fantastically twisted narwhal tusks for crosiers.

[3] Accounts of the exact number who wintered differ.

Meanwhile the vessels of his company scoured the coast to drum up a prosperous trade, but Dutch whaling ships operating from regular bases in both the northern and southern fiords preceded them each season and bought up so much of the Eskimos' blubber, skins, and ivory that the Bergen vessels had to sail home half empty. The company swallowed its losses for six successive years, but then dissension broke out among its partners and it dissolved.

Those six years, nevertheless, allowed Egede to win his battle: not only did he build up enduring foundations under his mission, but he explored the greater part of the coast between Kap Farvel (Cape Farewell) and Holsteinsborg, much of which was previously unknown. Unsolved, however, was the problem whether Denmark could still open up a profitable trade in the region. To answer that question the King transferred all trade and navigation rights from the defunct Bergen company to one of its former directors, Magnus Schiötte, and ordered him to convey to Greenland a royal commissioner who would investigate conditions on the spot and consult with Egede. The commissioner returned to Copenhagen with a favourable report, whereupon the King instructed Schiötte to prosecute the trade with vigour, circumventing the Dutch by setting up a whaling station in Disko Bugt, while he himself organized an expedition to search for Eystribygd (the eastern settlement of the early Norsemen, wrongly located at that time on Greenland's east coast), and to establish Denmark's rule over that still unexplored area by setting up one or two trading posts.

The King pushed rapidly ahead with his plan, and in 1728 despatched to Godthåb a military governor escorted by 30 soldiers, 12 horses, and 24 jail-birds —12 men and 12 women—who were to be married by lot immediately so that they might people the country and found colonies. The strange expedition bravely set out from Copenhagen to uphold Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland and enforce her historic monopoly of its trade; but it ended, not surprisingly, in a complete fiasco. All twelve horses died on the outward voyage or soon after they were landed; most of the soldiers and prospective settlers succumbed to scurvy during the first winter; and the wretched survivors, including their incompetent commander, were repatriated to Denmark in 1731. Only Egede and his handful of stout-hearted companions still clung to the Godthåb mission. This little band, undaunted, now called on King Frederik's successor, Christian VI, to carry on the trade and colonization program of his predecessor and bring it to fruition.

The new monarch was prudent. He consulted first some of the leading merchants in his kingdom, then in 1734, following their recommendations, he entrusted the conduct of Greenland affairs for six years to an enterprising citizen, Jacob Severin, to whom he granted a monopoly of the island's trade on condition that he supported the civilizing efforts of Egede and of Egede's sponsor in Denmark, the Mission College. Egede's health, unfortunately, broke down about this time, forcing him to charge another clergyman with his Godthåb mission and return to Denmark, where he organized a seminary to train catechists for the Greenland work that lay so near his heart. In Godthåb, however, he left his two sons, who had learned the difficult Eskimo tongue in childhood and spoke it more fluently than he did.

The younger Egedes enlisted in Severin's service and helped him to found a new mission and trading settlement at Christianshåb, in Disko Bugt, at that period the most populous district on Greenland's west coast, much frequented

in consequence by foreign whalers and traders. There Severin encountered strong resistance from the Dutch, who rejected his country's claim to sovereignty and eluded his navy-armed vessels by slipping into the numerous Eskimo encampments very early in the spring and buying up everything that was merchantable. Despite their opposition the Danish merchant stubbornly held his ground and, supported by the king, who extended his charter to 1750, checked his competitors by establishing two additional mission and trading stations, one at Jakobshavn in Disko Bugt a few miles north of Christianshåb, the other at Frederikshåb, a fairly populous district in south Greenland. For sixteen years Severin expended most of his energy and wealth in consolidating his nation's hold on the island and in furthering the spread of Christianity and civilization among its primitive inhabitants. Only in 1750, after his health failed him, did he surrender his charter, and Frederik V then transferred the monopoly of Greenland's trade and administration for forty years to a joint stock organization, the General Trading Company.

The General Trading Company exercised its Greenland charter for twenty-five years, but never succeeded in paying its way, despite a government subsidy that was increased in 1757, and again in 1763, to help defray the heavy costs of transportation. Like Severin, it met with fierce opposition from the Dutch, whom it combatted vigorously with the same tactics as its predecessor, namely, by establishing shore trading posts at various locations along the coast, posts which expanded later into permanent settlements. Figure 2 marks their positions, and the dates when they were founded.

The king followed the fortunes of the trading company with great interest and endeavoured to forward its operations by issuing two Letters Patent, one in 1751 and the second seven years later, which forbade any foreigner, or Dane who was not an agent of the company, to trade at or near any existing settlement on Greenland's west coast, or any settlement which might be established there at some future date. Foreign vessels, however, paid little attention to his proclamations until about 1763, when Holland, the principal offender, reached an agreement with Denmark that Dutch vessels might fish and whale off Greenland's coast, but would strictly refrain from all traffic with the Eskimos on its shores.

For a decade after this agreement the General Trading Company limped along, crippled by difficulties in its European enterprises and by the loss of several vessels in Greenland waters. In 1765 it essayed whaling from a base at Holsteinsborg, but quickly abandoned the experiment when the catch proved disappointing. Only a subsidy from the government, indeed, kept its operations solvent, and a considerable part of that subsidy went to defray the expenses of the mission stations whose support the king had placed upon its shoulders.[1] In Copenhagen, meanwhile, the Danish-Norwegian government, which had remained neutral during the bitter Seven Years' War, plotted to preserve its neutrality throughout the further disturbances that were brewing

[1]Cf. "His Majesty, out of his wonted most glorious Zeal for the Growth and Advancement of the Church of Christ, has most graciously provided, by a considerable Sum of Money yearly set apart, for the *Greenland* Missionaries Entertainment, which Royal Bounty continues to this Day . . . But as a good deal of this Bounty Money must be employed in the promoting of Trade (without which the Mission could not subsist) but little remains for the promoting the proper End of the Mission, which is the Conversion of the Heathens . . ." (Egede, 1745, pp. 214–5).

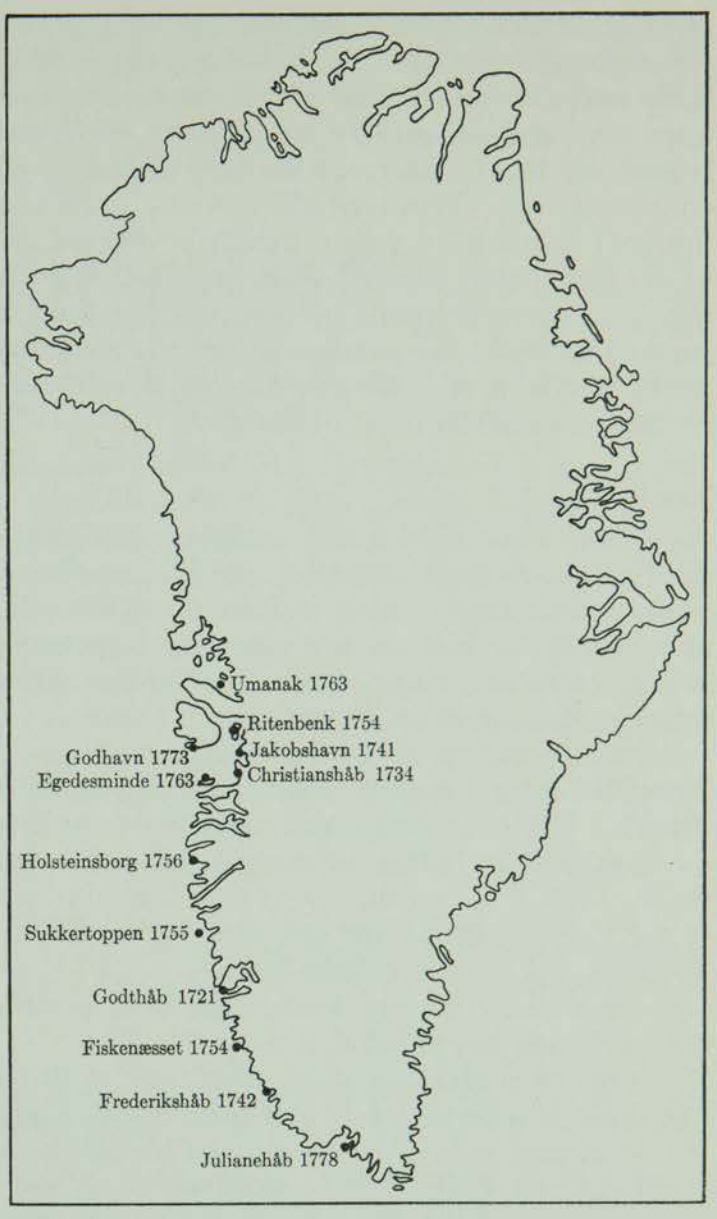

Fig. 2. Some early settlements with dates of their founding. (After Bobé, 1929).

and to wrest from its rivals the hegemony of all trade in arctic and subarctic waters. The involvement of Holland and of other maritime nations in the American War of Independence gave Denmark her opportunity. Quickly she expanded her shipbuilding, revoked the monopoly of the Greenland trade which she had entrusted to the General Trading Company twenty-five years earlier, re-affirmed her now uncontested sovereignty over the island and, quarantining it for nearly two centuries from the outside world, concentrated all its trade in the hands of her officials.

We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that Greenland's first appearance on the stage of modern history ended in 1775 with the outbreak of the American Revolution. Throughout the fifty years preceding that date the island had been a battle-ground on which Danish traders and missionaries struggled, first for a foothold, then for supremacy. By the close of the century's third quarter Denmark had made good her claim to sovereignty over at least the western coastline, but had not officially attempted either to colonize

or to administer it after the abortive expedition to Godthåb in 1728. She knew —none better—that the political thinking of that age linked sovereignty and trade inseparably, and that it was extremely doubtful whether she could permanently retain either the sovereignty of Greenland or its trade unless she fenced off the island from the rest of the world and rigidly controlled its commercial life. Down to 1775, however, she had been unwilling to incur the financial risks such a policy entailed. Instead, she had farmed out the trade to her merchants, backing them with measures that imposed only token contributions from the public purse, and Egede's Christianizing mission that had sparked her claim to sovereignty she had subordinated to the trading companies, which starved it of funds and delayed its expansion in their desperate efforts to preserve themselves from bankruptcy.

Trade

Let us now pause a few minutes and survey how trade proceeded during this first period of Danish rule. And let me illustrate from my own experience how it could begin and even flourish between European seamen who neither understood the Eskimo language nor possessed interpreters, and Greenland Eskimos who had never seen or heard of a human being different from themselves in features, dress, and speech.

In the summer of 1929 I camped with my family for several weeks on Parry Island, a Canadian Indian reservation off the northeast coast of Lake Huron. Late one afternoon I noticed two gulls circling and screaming above our tent, and an Indian hovering in his canoe about two hundred yards from shore. When he saw that I was watching him he signalled, and I walked down to the water's edge to find out what he wanted. There, on a rock at my feet, lay three fine, freshly-caught bass.

I looked at the fish, then at the Indian in the canoe. He silently waved his arm to me and paddled away.

Two days later, about the same hour of the afternoon, he reappeared, left two more bass on the rock, and again paddled off before I could speak to him.

Who was he? Why was he so friendly?

I did not know, but I rowed across to the mainland the next morning, bought a large tin of tobacco and one or two other trifles, and laid them on the rock under a small stone. On the third day the Indian returned, deposited three fish, gathered up the tobacco and other items I had left and, waving his usual greeting, went his way. During all the weeks we camped in that vicinity he supplied us with fresh fish, but neither approached us nor told us his name. Later, however, one of his relatives informed me that he was a licensed guide for the tourists who visit this district each summer, and that the government prohibited him from selling any surplus fish under pain of losing his licence. Gifts, of course, were not sales, and our reticent friend had been well satisfied with our improvised arrangement.

The Dutch and other Europeans who hunted whales off the coast of Greenland at the beginning of the seventeenth century must often have resorted to this "silent trade"; for at that period no European could speak the Eskimo language, and no Eskimo could understand a word of any tongue except his own. Gradually, as each party gained confidence, it would have learned the

names of a few articles that changed hands—e.g. ivory, blubber, knife; but prior to the erection of shore stations the European trader would continue to lay out his goods on the beach, and perhaps withdraw to his boat while his timid customers inspected them and brought equivalents. We can find a grim echo of the custom, indeed, in the pages of Crantz, who wrote at the end of the eighteenth century:

> "At *Disko,* they [the Eskimos] enticed the crew of a smuggler to bring their goods on shore. No sooner was the merchandize landed, than a fellow, who was in the plot, came running down with intelligence that the Danish factors were on the road. The smugglers, panic-struck, left all their goods behind, and fled to their boat; several of them were killed by a party stationed in ambush behind the rocks, and the rest of the perfidious natives carried off the whole booty." (Crantz, 1820, vol. 2, p. 77, footnote).[1]

Egede's founding of a mission at Godthåb in 1721 ushered in a new era. The Eskimos of that district, especially the children, quickly learned all the Danish that was needed for simple barter, and a few Danes imbibed enough of the Greenland language to make their wishes known. Egede himself, after three or four years, spoke Eskimo with moderate fluency, and his two sons who managed the new trading posts set up by Severin were completely bilingual. As for the Eskimos, daily contact with the handful of white men who settled in their midst must have dispelled many of their misunderstandings and fears, increased their desire for metal goods to replace their traditional tools, weapons, and utensils of stone, and spurred their craving for such European articles as beads and textiles which were of much more doubtful value. Egede thus describes the trade that he witnessed in his day:

> "The Goods and Commodities *Greenland* affords for the entertaining of Commerce, or Traffick, are Whale Blubber or Fat, and Whale-Bones, Unicorn Horns, Rain-deer Skins and Hides, Seal and Fox-Skins. These Wares they use to barter against Merchandizes of our Produce, as Coats and Shirts made of white, blue, red or strip'd Linen or Woollen Cloth; as also Knives, Hand-Saws, Needles, Hooks to angle with, Looking-Glasses, and other such Merchandize or hardWares. Besides what they buy of Wood, as Rafts, Poles, Deal-Boards, Chests, and of Brass and Copper, as Kettles and the like, Tin Dishes and Plates; for which they pay to the full Price. At the Beginning of our late Settlement in those Parts the Trade was much brisker than at present, and much more profitable; for foreign Traders flocking thither in great Number, have so overstock'd them with Goods, and undersold one another, to draw the Natives to them from others, that the Trade is considerably slackened and fallen." (Egede, 1745, pp. 175–6).

Naturally, the Eskimos had no conception of money, but as time passed and the market became more discriminating they agreed with the traders on certain exchange rates. Crantz reported that tobacco[2] had become in his day

[1]Cf. "From this period [around 1712] we also have a list of the articles of trade, which were in greatest request among the Greenlanders, *viz.* scissors, knives, needles, woollen and linen fabrics, kettles and glass. The trade took place in the manner that the Greenlanders pointed at the articles which they wished to have, and then laid by skins and blubber and walrus tusks in such quantities as they thought fit. Then goods were added or subtracted on both sides, until the bargain was concluded." (Bobé, 1929, p. 83).

[2]Cf. "Tobacco, which they use only in snuff, is their small coin. They expect a piece of tobacco for every service: with this drug they pay their shoemakers and tailors; they proffer, for a small quantity of it, a handful of eider-down, a parcel of eggs, birds, a plate of fish, and the like; and for this many a poor, miserable, spendthrift barters the clothes from his back, and starves with his children, rather than part with the luxury; this article in fine, like spirituous liquors among other nations, is a fertile source of indigence and misery." (Crantz, 1820, vol. 1, pp. 161–2).

the "current coin" of the country, as it was in Melanesia a hundred years later; but during Hans Egede's sojourn in Greenland fifty years before Crantz the Eskimos would not touch the narcotic weed, and were only just learning to drink wine and brandy. At that early date it was the barrel of blubber that served as the standard of value, and so firmly did this measure establish itself that in 1764 the General Trading Company used it in working out definite exchange rates which it tried to impose on all its traders along Greenland's west coast (Sveistrup, 1943, p. 45).[1] I quote a few items only:

Table 1. Exchange rates in 1764.

1 barrel blubber	=	5–6 grey fox-skins
1 barrel	=	10–12 grey fox-skins
1 barrel	=	6 Greenland sealskins
1 barrel	=	8 small (speckled) sealskins
1 barrel	=	10 ordinary sealskins
5 barrels	=	1 rifle
½ barrel	=	1 lb. fine powder
⅛ barrel	=	1 lb. Dutch tobacco

Non-Danish vessels, of course, continued to set their own prices, varying them from place to place according to the exigencies of the market; but the political agreement with Holland about 1763 put an end to the colonizing activities of Denmark's most active rival, which then abandoned its shore bases and, with other non-Danish traders, conducted its commercial operations from shipboard only.

Denmark's General Trading Company usually manned its shore stations in Greenland with five men, all Europeans, since the Eskimos were still illiterate and ignorant of any foreign tongue. Three of the men operated the little pinnace in which the fourth, their trader-master, made the round of his district; the fifth was his assistant. Within each district the trader ruled as absolute monarch, conducting himself toward his subordinates, and toward the Eskimos with whom he came into contact, as harshly or benignly as suited his mood: only the missionary, if there was one, escaped his despotism. A few of the traders were men of very high calibre: the two sons of Hans Egede, for instance, Poul and Niels, combined great energy and business acumen with their father's missionary zeal, and just as faithfully as he, they helped the Eskimos who frequented their trading posts to bridge the gulf between their primitive, unsophisticated life and the restless, ruthless world of European commerce. Another very competent and high-minded trader was Lars Dalager, brother-in-law of the merchant Severin; he too laboured most of his life for the welfare of the Eskimos, teaching them, among other useful accomplishments, how to capture seals in nets.[2] These men, however, were exceptional. Tales of

[1]Cf. ". . . the Greenlanders were frequently given less than their due by unconscientious traders for whom the profit on the native products purchased was of far greater importance than their own low salary." (Bobé, 1929, p. 136). For the fraudulent tricks of some unscrupulous traders see Saabye, 1818, pp. 163–4).

[2]Hans Egede had suggested this method some years before. Cf. ". . . the Seal-Capture, which can be undertaken at very small Expences, *viz.* at the Coast with strong Nets, with which they may catch many thousands in *Greenland;* which, if hitherto not practised, ought to be imputed to Negligence and want of a good Regulation." (Egede, 1745, p. 178).

Greenland's harsh climate and savage inhabitants had given the island as evil a reputation as the "White Man's Grave" in West Africa, and the General Trading Company experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting employees for the region even among hardy Icelanders and the inhabitants of northern Norway.[1]

To every white trader of the early eighteenth century, whatever his nationality or character, barter frequently carried the spice of danger. Crantz reported that the Eskimos were suspected of massacring the crew of a Spanish whaler which had run aground in 1743 thirty leagues north of Godthåb; that two years previously they had stabbed to death the crew of a Dutch ship; and that seamen on many another vessel had met with a similar fate (Crantz, vol. 2, p. 77). At that period both Dutch and Danish traders were clamouring for "blubber, blubber" as insistently as the fur-traders in Canada were clamouring for "beaver", and in both Greenland and North America the high-handedness and unfair practices of a few individuals created resentment and occasionally violence. Happily, Greenland's Eskimos, like those of Canada's Baffin Island and Hudson Bay a century later, escaped the curse of intoxicating liquor which during the second half of the nineteenth century blighted the lives and decimated the ranks of the Eskimos of America's Western Arctic. How the eastern Eskimos avoided complete demoralization I do not know, for seamen are much the same on every ocean. Certainly, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the captains and crews of English whaling ships showed little reluctance or parsimony in sharing their liquor with the Greenlanders, despite the prohibition which Denmark's government tried to impose on the nationals of all countries.

Mission strife

It was not the traders only who sometimes ran into troubled waters, but the Lutheran mission which Hans Egede had opened near Godthåb; in the case of the mission, however, the trouble came not from Eskimos, but from a rival mission. The eighteenth century in northwestern Europe was an age of evangelical faith when Protestants accepted unquestioningly the supreme authority of the Bible interpreted more or less literally, and looked upon the visible world as a finite creation that would some day pass away in the twinkling of an eye. Man, created in God's image for the glory of God, should obey the Ten Commandments as re-interpreted by the Sermon on the Mount, and he should serve the Lord all the days of his life in patient expectation of his early translation to a realm of eternal happiness. His origin and his destiny made him the central figure in the universe, and just as the horse and the elephant ranked higher in that universe than the frog and the worm, so white men ranked higher than the black slaves they were shipping to the sugar

[1]Cf. this description of conditions at Frederikshåb in 1754–5: "The trader was an ordinary sailor, who had formerly been in the China trade, and had no knowledge of anything; he led an infamous life, exploited the Greenlanders and was extremely brutal towards them. The Danish crews quarelled and drank gin, and nothing but oaths and curses were heard on all sides on account of the hard service, the mean wages and the poor fare. The men were almost exclusively Icelanders and many of them died of scurvy. The assistant trader beat them; the missionary, a proud and uncompromising but exceedingly poor man, held a service twice in the course of the night, *viz.* at midnight and at six in the morning, and those who did not attend this service were punished." (Bobé, 1929, p. 119).

plantations in America, higher than the Eskimos who had never been favoured with a special revelation of the Gospel. More than a hundred years were to pass before this doctrine of white supremacy would be shaken by visions of the real immensity and complexity of our universe, disrupted by deep-probing theories concerning the nature and evolution of matter and of mind. Throughout the eighteenth, and most of the nineteenth, century Denmark considered it her duty, in obedience to the teachings of the New Testament, to convert the Eskimos to the Christian faith and ease the hardships and sorrows of their daily lives; but not to give them rights and privileges equal to those of the favoured whites, and not to make them discontented with the humble position allotted to them on earth by their Creator. The nation's established church, the Lutheran, upheld these doctrines as rigidly as other Protestant churches of that day, and Hans Egede, the founder of the Godthåb mission and the "father of modern Greenland", was a clergyman of the Lutheran faith.

It is important to remember that in the eyes of the Copenhagen government Egede, and all other clergymen of the Danish Lutheran church, were employees of the state, i.e. civil servants. Directly or indirectly they owed their positions to the state; financially they depended on the state for their maintenance, and administratively they were responsible to a cabinet minister, or, in the case of Egede and his immediate successors in Greenland, to a Mission College which had been created by the crown and in 1860 was abolished by it.

About eleven years after the founding of the Godthåb mission the King of Denmark entertained Count Zinzendorf, a German social and religious reformer who had just organized a new religious sect, the Moravian, as fundamentalist in outlook as its Lutheran parent, but distinguishable by a few rituals. Soon after Zinzendorf's visit to Copenhagen three members of his Moravian community arrived in that city and requested the assistance of the King in setting up a second mission in Greenland. Imprudently, and without notifying Egede, the monarch arranged free passage for them on a Danish vessel which was sailing the following spring, and he gave them a letter of commendation to be delivered to Egede when they reached Greenland.

They landed at Godthåb in the summer of 1733 and duly delivered their letter, whereupon Egede, though greatly surprised, helped them to set up a mission "Neu Herrnhut", two kilometres south of his own, and undertook to teach them the rudiments of the Eskimo language. For a short time all went well, but then friction arose and flamed into a bitter quarrel. Unlike the Danish Lutherans, the Moravians were a private, autonomous sect dependent for their support on voluntary contributions, but by leaping over national boundaries they had won adherents or sympathizers in England, Holland, Denmark, and other countries, some of whom were men of wealth and influence. Consequently, they could finance their Greenland mission more liberally than Denmark's General Trading Company financed Egede's, and thus enable it to maintain a larger staff. Before many years the growing number of its converts, and its antipathy to the neighbouring Lutheran mission, led it into a grave mistake. Being less concerned with the material prosperity of its disciples than with their spiritual well-being, and fearful lest they should backslide, or stray into the wrong fold, if they wandered as freely as before and continued to associate with their fellow-natives, it tried to contain them within the precincts of its mission station and the immediate neighbourhood,

even to check their seasonal dispersal along the coast to their traditional hunting-grounds unless they were accompanied by a Moravian pastor. But time quickly uncovered the evil effects of this policy. It produced, not the "pressure on the land" that would have occurred in an agricultural country, but a "pressure on the sea", which in the vicinity of Neu Herrnhut did not contain enough seals and other marine fauna to support an increasing human population. The "faithful" gradually became more and more impoverished, more and more dependent on white traders for blubber to burn in their cooking-lamps and for food to keep starvation from their doors (Ostermann, 1929b, pp. 320–1, 342). Their health declined, their energy wasted away, and they became a depressed people, despondent serfs of the foreign missionaries.[1]

In 1758 the Moravians established a second mission station, Lichtenfels, about 120 miles south of Godthåb near Fiskenæsset, and there they adopted the same policy, for the same reasons. They adopted it, too, at other stations which they founded later. However, Neu Herrnhut continued to be their headquarters, and it was there that their strife with the Lutherans waxed fiercest.

A report sent to Copenhagen in 1765 declared:

> "the Greenlanders here, indeed, even the heathen believe that the missionaries teach them of *two different Gods*, one at Godthaab and another at Herrnhut" (Ostermann, 1929b, p. 300).

The Eskimos were in fact thoroughly confused, so confused, that in several places native reformers sprang up who tried to blend Christian, or supposedly Christian doctrines with the superstitions of their forefathers, to claim reception of heavenly visions[2] or instructions from on high to found new religions that would be more appealing, because more intelligible, to their fellow countrymen. Nearly two centuries later, during the 1920's and the 1930's, similar "Messiah" manifestations were to disturb the tranquillity of the Eskimos in Canada's Eastern Arctic, there too provoked by conflicting missionary teachings that aggravated the unrest of ancient societies struggling desperately for survival. Every continent, even the remote North Island of New Zealand, has witnessed the phenomenon. In some parts of the world it has triggered bloody wars; more often it has erupted suddenly, and died out just as suddenly. The religious upheavals of Greenland subsided quickly at the end of the eighteenth century, after the Danish government had taken into its own hands the trade and administration of the island and lent the weight of its support to the mission of its established church.

[1]Two Moravian missionaries who had served in Greenland, Jens Haven and Christian Drachart, led the little party which in 1771 established at Nain the first Christian mission on Labrador's Atlantic coast. Thereafter until the beginning of the twentieth century the Moravians were the *de facto* rulers of the entire coastline between the mouth of Hamilton Inlet and Cape Chidley at the entrance to Hudson Strait: they monopolized nearly all its trade, educated both its Eskimos and its whites, and watched over the health of both peoples. Their discipline was less severe, their rule less authoritarian, than on Greenland's west coast, doubtless because no other religious sect invaded their territory until after the Second World War, and because the Newfoundland government, absorbed in problems elsewhere, was content to leave in their hands the full administration of the Eskimos, whose descendants still comprise the largest element in the region's population.

[2]Cf. the vision recorded by Saabye, 1818, p. 278.

During the nineteenth century Danish officials frequently deplored the poverty and backwardness of the Greenlanders in the Moravian settlements, and drew their government's attention to the needlessness of two "missionary" organizations in a country that had long ceased to shelter any pagans save on its still unknown eastern and far northern coasts (cf. Rink, 1877, pp. 283–5). Despite their criticisms, the Moravians carried on until the very end of that century, and only in 1900 did they hand over the keys of their missions to the Greenland Lutheran Church, amid dignified ceremonies marked by mutual goodwill.

Economic and social changes

Hans Egede, being a clerygman, not a merchant, had hoped that Greenland commerce and the mission he was founding would work hand in hand to open up the almost virgin island and unite its Eskimos with the world of European civilization, the mission guiding and commerce following docilely in its footsteps. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, however, the two activities, inevitably perhaps, travelled separate paths.[1]

The entire west coast of Greenland has been cut into deep indentations. Ice blocks the fiords throughout the greater part of the year, and during the season of open water communications are difficult and frequently dangerous. Scattered at intervals over the thousand miles between Upernavik and Julianehåb there stood, in 1775, thirteen trading posts and nine or ten mission stations, each staffed with from one to five Europeans. Up to that time Denmark had not appointed any governor to rule the colony, nor any official or officials to supervise its long coastline. Every trader, to a considerable degree also every missionary, was a law unto himself, and between the two representatives of Danish civilization there was scant cooperation even when they shared the same settlement.[2] The heads of the trading company in Copenhagen, and the Mission College in that city through which the company funnelled its subsidy to the Lutheran missions, could not sift out truth from fable in the rumours that reached them from the colony, could not picture the real conditions there or comprehend what was happening. As for the Eskimos, in the eyes of all Europeans, whether in Denmark or in Greenland, they were an inferior people, and their opinions were neither sought nor heeded.

Europe demanded from Greenland mainly blubber, which the Danish trading posts shipped to their company for the extraction of its oil; and the company computed the success or failure of each post more from the amount of blubber it exported than from the numbers of sealskins and fox-furs it also supplied, although the values of the latter were by no means negligible. Whales yield far more blubber than other marine mammals, but by the end of the eighteenth century overhunting had so reduced their numbers that the traders relied mainly on the seals which the Eskimos were harpooning for their

[1]"Hans Egede's basic idea, that the economic activities of the country were to form the basis of the missionary work was subsequently altered to the effect that economic activities were to form the basis of cultural work and it became the accepted view throughout the nineteenth century that Denmark had undertaken to aid the Greenland population in cultural respects so as to enable it gradually to establish contact with the outside world without becoming subject to exploitation." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 2).

[2]Cf. Saabye, 1818, chap. 8.

daily food, and they relentlessly pressed the natives to trade in every sealskin and every pound of seal-blubber surplus to their immediate needs. Since farsightedness and providence are not innate in human beings and rarely conspicuous among primitive hunters (who generally let nature regulate their daily lives and give little heed to the morrow), it frequently happened that an Eskimo would trade his invaluable sealskin coat and sealskin tent for cheap European clothing and a tent of cloth, and would barter away so much of his blubber that when winter came he lacked sufficient fuel to heat his dwelling and cook his food. His needs, of course, had multiplied with the coming of the white men, who exposed to his hungry gaze tools and vessels of metal far superior to his traditional utensils of stone and skin, muskets more accurate and deadly than his bow and arrows, and flawless lumber incomparably stronger and more durable than the half-rotted driftwood that occasionally floated up on his shores. And it was not only his needs that had multiplied; new desires welled up inside him whenever he handled the gaily coloured cloths, the beads, the tobacco, and all the other unfamiliar luxuries which the trader shrewdly laid out in front of him. Like the foxes he himself lured with blubber, he was trapped, a prisoner henceforth of an acquisitive society which was fast depriving him of his age-old independence and liberty.

> "The trading intercourse between the natives on one hand, and Danes and foreigners on the other, had utterly changed the Greenlanders in the neighbourhood of the settlements, both as regards dress and other necessities of life. The men began to use kerchiefs around their necks, buckles on their shoes and fine garters, indeed, they had even pockets in their trousers to keep their snuff and kerchiefs, while the women wore a kind of small mantilla, entirely covered with bows of broad silk ribbons. They also quickly acquired a taste for tobacco mixed with snuff, which, after powder and bullets, became the merchandise in greatest request, and in order to get this they were ready to sell their very clothes. The amount of snuff sold constantly increased, all the more as it was a current idea in those days that snuff extracted unwholesome humours from the head and was a remedy against weak eyes.
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> "The dependency of the Greenlanders upon the local trader and his assistants resulted in a steadily growing decline of social and economic conditions." (Bobé, 1929, pp. 118–9).

We must not delude ourselves with the idea that the Eskimos had remained static throughout the many centuries they had lived in Greenland. Change occurs unceasingly in every living thing that grows and decays, blossoms and fades, yet endures from generation to generation—change that follows no detectable path and leads to no discernible goal. The Eskimos, bound as are all people to life's treadmill, could not escape nature's inexorable law. Archaeology has revealed to us modifications in the Greenlanders' tools and weapons between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries, before the European whalers and Danish merchants approached their shores; and the new science of linguistics has detected incipient variations in their speech during the same centuries. Nevertheless, at no period in their long history, as far as we can discover, did they ever undergo so violent an upheaval, so revolutionary a change, as they now experienced in the eighteenth century, when the traders and missionaries began to settle in their midst.

The white colonists, of course, were no more able to perceive the vastness of the change they were stirring up than we of today can assess the immensity of the revolution which is tormenting our own generation. Even if they had

perceived what was happening, we may doubt whether it would have made much difference; for so great was the time span separating their Danish culture from that of their stone-age Eskimo neighbours that, however they conducted themselves, their impact was bound to bring disaster to the natives, to endanger in fact their very survival.

The small sealing and fishing encampments along the coast, and the summer tents of the caribou-hunters in mountain valleys escaped rather lightly from the earliest clashes, but in the larger communities their effects became visible very quickly. In 1733, only twelve years after Egede's landing, the inscrutable god of the white men, as the Eskimos believed, visited all their households in and around Godthåb with a mysterious rain of death—smallpox—from which the helping spirits of their own shamans could not shield them. Every family carried one member—some families more than one—out of its tent, or its stone-and-sod house, and covered him (or her) with stones on the hillside overlooking the sea so that nature might reclaim him after her own fashion. One-fourth of the inhabitants of Greenland's west coast perished in that year, when the population dropped from an estimated 8,000 to perhaps 6,000. And less than a century later, in 1800, the same disease struck again, carrying off more than 500 individuals.

Other diseases never experienced by the pre-European Eskimos followed the trail of smallpox, and one, tuberculosis, until the 1950's the greatest plague throughout arctic America, preceded it, having been introduced by whalers, apparently, about the end of the seventeenth century.[1] In our twentieth century the first vessel that reaches Greenland from Denmark at the opening of the navigation season each summer continues to bring in, as it did to the first colonists, the 'ship's disease', a bronchial or enteric catarrh, mild in some years and extremely serious in others, which rapidly travels from one end of the coast to the other. Most of the diseases which occur in Europe have now made their way into Greenland, where a few, e.g. whooping-cough, have committed grave ravages. No blame attaches to Denmark. She supplied her early missionaries with medicines for the treatment of the Eskimos' ailments; as early as 1742 she stationed a physician in Godthåb, where he remained for two years; and at the end of the eighteenth century she quarantined the whole island and established in Disko Bugt a permanent post, under a qualified surgeon, to inaugurate what has since become a smoothly functioning medical service that supervises the health of every Greenland family, however remote its habitation. Even the most efficient medical service, however, cannot prevent the upsurge of diseases and their spread into every remote corner of our globe; and as long as man remains a *zoon politikon*, as long as he craves the society of his fellowmen and continues to dot the earth with larger and larger cities, he will have to confide his health less to human doctors and their synthetic drugs than to the biological controls which nature imposes on all living things whenever we allow her free play.

Nations and individuals can repair with amazing rapidity both the scars of wars and the ravages of diseases, as we witnessed in Germany, Russia, and elsewhere after the two recent world conflicts. It need not surprise us, then, that

[1] ". . . it is possible to say for certain that it existed prior to the beginning of the Danish settlement" (Bertelsen, 1929, p. 380).

the Godthåb district, which seems to have been the hardest hit by the smallpox epidemic of 1733, redeemed its population loss in a single generation. Very soon afterwards, however, both this district and the rest of west Greenland were called upon to resist a second enemy, one that was even more dangerous. For the deadliest foe an ancient society can encounter is the concealed one which attacks its foundations, a foe that resembles the acid in the basement water of Spain's Burgos Cathedral which is crumbling to dust that edifice's limestone pillars, and it was an enemy of this nature that now attacked the whole structure of Eskimo society.

Significantly, it was the Christian religion, at that period the most intolerant of all religions, which spearheaded the attack—the Christian religion as taught by the early missionaries, who proclaimed imminent punishment in hell-fire for all unbelievers, but especially for those worshippers of Satan, the shamans.[1] The Danish government underwrote its missionaries' threats by decreeing, in 1746, that the Eskimos should break away from the devil's malefactors (Lindow, 1929, p. 55); and although no Royal Statute with this or any similar intent could convey any meaning to the Eskimos of that day, it must have hardened the authoritarian attitudes of the traders and missionaries towards them and increased the tension and unrest. Judging from my own experiences with Eskimo shamans in arctic Canada, these native 'clergy' were as little imposters and cheats as the missionaries themselves, but firmly believed, as did their kinsfolk, that they enjoyed a special rapport with a normally unseen spirit-world, and honestly used their privileged status and supposedly extraordinary powers to guide and protect their little communities. In many instances they were the most intelligent individuals in those communities, and for that reason the acknowledged leaders; and though they possessed no official authority—for Eskimo society was too amorphous to spawn officials, or to throw up powerful chiefs like Chaka the Zulu in South Africa—yet their rejection and downgrading by the incoming whites threw their communities into disarray and powerfully contributed to the breakdown of the social order. An ancestral religion is not a bucket of unclean water which can be nonchalantly emptied overboard and refilled with clear liquid; it is a *weltanschauung*, an interpretation of the world of our senses, and an attitude towards that world which colours a society's every action and tinges its outlook and judgement on every phenomenon and event. Man's mind cannot become a void and still endure; nor can the new ideas and new doctrines a missionary tries to impart to his flock superimpose themselves unaltered on the old doctrines or be absorbed without change. They act rather as catalysts, permeating the ideas and outlook his flock already entertains and giving them new dimensions and new qualities.

The early fundamentalist missionaries, then, greatly erred—the Moravians, who were the sterner disciplinarians, more perhaps than the Lutherans—when they arbitrarily imposed their rule over the Eskimo communities and destroyed the one element in the native society, the shamans, that might have guided it across the sea of primitive ignorance and superstition into civilization's promised land. They erred also when they condemned the Eskimos' festivals and dances,

[1]For the conflicts between shamanism and Christianity in Greenland see B. Jensen, 1962, pp. 209–15.

denounced the singing contests that supplied the place of law-courts in the settling of quarrels, and frowned on such harmless customs as tattooing because the Europeans of that day adjudged them unacceptable. Moravians and Lutherans alike—or at least some of them—carried their religious strife right inside the large multi-family Eskimo dwellings by sharply differentiating between the redeemed and the still-heathen; and the Moravians aggravated the strife by segregating their own redeemed and confining them to the mission's 'sheep-folds', where they compelled the men to supply them with meat, the women to make skin garments for them and, in crews of ten or a dozen, to row them around their districts.

In their high-handed oppression of the natives the missionaries found ready allies in the traders, who added to the ferment and increased the discontent by ignoring or deriding the socialistic or, more accurately perhaps, communalistic pattern of life which the Eskimos had evolved through the centuries, and by demanding that they replace it with the totally different pattern, individualistic, competitive, and aggressive, which had developed in the very dissimilar environment of continental Europe. The richness of this European pattern, the appeal of its variegated commercialism to human selfishness and greed, deflected the judgements of the unsophisticated Eskimos, excited in them new cravings many of which could never be satisfied, and accelerated the disintegration of a social life that was being simultaneously sapped by the missionaries.

Neither the traders nor the missionaries, we may be sure, deliberately set out to destroy the entire framework of Eskimo society. No one in his senses would suggest that they purposely carried to Greenland in 1733 the terrible scourge of smallpox, or that they consciously introduced into the island the tuberculosis and other diseases which have plagued it ever since. They knew, as we know, that heaven exempts from such evils neither Europeans, nor Eskimos, nor any other sin-laden descendants of Adam and Eve, our first ancestors, whether black, white, or yellow, male or female, old or young. The traders could honestly claim that it was not their fault if Eskimo society was crumbling at the touch of European commerce, if the hunters had begun to rebel at sharing with all their house-mates—the lazy and the ne'er-do-wells equally with the enterprising and resourceful—the seal blubber and the sealskins so necessary now to buy steel knives, muskets, and other indispensable goods which only Europeans could supply. No one, surely, could lay any blame at the traders' doors if more and more natives strove to break loose from their traditional chains, to reserve for themselves and their immediate families the products of their hunting, to live in separate homes, to acquire as much material wealth as they could lay their hands on, and to retain it for their private use without the obligation to share it with their kin. Was not this the natural desire, the natural right, of every man—the right to live, not as a worker in a communal bee-hive pooling all the honey he gathered unremittingly from daylight to dark, but as a free agent in a free-enterprise society which allowed him to enjoy the fruits of the labour of his own hands? All white men (save perhaps a handful of religious monks and nuns) demanded this freedom. So also did an increasing number of Greenland half-breeds, offspring of white men and Eskimo women, who knew no home except Greenland, no way of life different from the one they had shared at the trading and mission settlements,

and at the sealing and hunting camps dispersed along the coast. Why should not the Eskimos be equally free?

Inevitably, then, the principal settlements on Greenland's west coast drew in, as with social magnets, a miscellaneous assortment of Eskimos and half-breeds who imitated the dress and manners of the whites, copied their one-family homes, and relied upon whatever wage-employment was available for a part at least of their maintenance. The European-dominated settlements promised them more variety, more attractions and more excitement, than their own communities; they offered each Eskimo family a sanctuary where it could live its own life unhampered by wanted or unwanted kinsmen within its home. Moreover, the traders and the missionaries needed help: toward the end of the eighteenth century each Moravian mission was employing about a dozen natives permanently, and others for special tasks, while the traders, who always maintained three or four white servants at their posts, frequently offered the Eskimos menial jobs, very few, however, of long duration.

This bright prospect of settlement life, however, proved to be only a mirage. The white men did not cease to regard the Eskimos as inferior people whom they might freely trade with and gather into the Christian fold, but whom they took into their service only for prestige or when no other help was available. Because Greenland could nourish no industries of any kind the traders seldom needed extra help unless there were boats to load and unload, or goods and passengers to freight along the coast. Naturally, living at a trading post made it easier for the Eskimos to sell their surplus meat and skins and to stock themselves with European articles, but it ignored the danger that any concentration of hunters in one locality could reduce the supply of seals in the vicinity and raise the spectre of starvation. Before many years, in fact, the steady drift of Eskimos into certain trading settlements did threaten to create the same distressing conditions as haunted the Moravians' isolated missions, where an overcrowded, ill-nourished proletariat chafed at its wretched circumstances and viewed the future with apprehension. In scattered outposts remote from both the traders and the missions the health and morale of the Eskimos remained less impaired; but we can hardly doubt that it was the widespread economic and social distress, even more perhaps than the religious dissension, which fuelled the Messianic revolts of the late eighteenth century and ushered in what weather experts would call a climate of turbulence.

Education

The canvas I have unrolled thus far depicts a desolate, ice-capped island dimly emerging from the mists of the past amid a violent tempest, which beat and buffeted the small groups of primitive Eskimos valiantly clinging to its narrow coast. On all sides their earth was slipping, undermined by strangers who had landed on their shores, seemingly from outer space. Their economy's age-old bases were shaking, their social edifice had cracked, and the religious beliefs which had strengthened and guided them through earlier crises were flickering and fading like will-o'-the-wisps, darkening the gloom that was closing in around them. Desperately they were searching for stable ground to save them from sliding into eternity's abyss. But where could they look for stable

ground? Where could they gain the education and the training which we Europeans count on to give us a solid base from which to advance and take up life's challenge?

This was a problem that greatly troubled Hans Egede both before and after he left Greenland. He realized that if he was to Christianize the whole west coast of the island within a reasonable period he would have to station at least a dozen teachers in as many localities along its thousand miles of shoreline; and he lacked the funds to engage that number of white missionaries, even if they should be available. Moreover, since as yet only he and his family spoke fluent Eskimo, and no native, or virtually none, understood more than a few words of Danish, white missionaries would be of little service until they too gained a competent knowledge of the difficult Eskimo tongue—a task that requires at the least three years, except for those rare individuals whom nature has endowed with a special aptitude for learning foreign languages. In Greenland itself he could do little more than gather a few Eskimo children into his home, impart to them the rudiments of Lutheran Christianity, and train them to read and write in their own tongue, using the Danish alphabet; but after his return to Denmark and his appointment by the King as Director of the newly founded Greenland Seminary, he set about teaching the Eskimo language to promising white boys from the Copenhagen orphanage, whom he then urged to volunteer for service in Greenland as missionaries, catechists, and assistant traders. Some did, and taking to themselves Eskimo wives, bequeathed the colony a sturdy line of children and grandchildren who, merging with both the Danish and the native population, encouraged the latter to settle down in permanent Christian communities.

> "In the former times of the Mission, it was usual to send to Greenland, boys from the Foundling Hospital, after they had been confirmed. By their intercourse with the natives, they soon learned the language, and became naturalized in a short time. When their age admitted of it, they were employed as chief Catechists; and were of great use to the Missionaries, particularly to those who had but lately arrived, till they had learned the language. To these Catechists, who were amenable to the laws, and might be brought to account, the Missionary could, with more confidence, entrust the remote places in his district, than to a native Catechist, who, being an independent Greenlander, can only be punished by a reproof, which indeed afflicts him, and makes him ashamed, or by his discharge, which he but little regards." (Saabye, 1818, p. 63).

Egede's scheme was successful then, but on a small scale only. It ambled at too leisurely a pace to meet the island's galloping needs, and was speedily outstripped by another, financed, as was Egede's also, by the patriotic merchant Severin. This second scheme had its birth in 1740 with the appointment of two teachers, one Danish and one Eskimo, at the parent mission in Godthåb, and two others at the daughter mission in Christianshåb, at that time the only permanent Lutheran stations in Greenland. In each of these places the teachers enrolled about two dozen children ten years of age and over, and taught them to read, to write, and to recite Egede's 'Translation of the Lutheran Catechism'. From that date onward the Mission College attempted to furnish similar schooling to every important settlement that crystallized out; but because its exiguous funds could not maintain more than five or six white teachers—for many years only four—it authorized those missionaries already in the field to appoint as catechists any volunteers who possessed the minimum qualifications, whether

they were trained or untrained, Danish, Eskimo, or half-breed. These last, the half-breeds, had become fairly numerous by the second half of the eighteenth century, and they eagerly sought such teaching jobs because the position, though very poorly paid, gave them considerable prestige; but many an outlying encampment had to content itself with a provisional instructor, sometimes just an Eskimo hunter who had learned to read and write in his own childhood, and was now willing to gather the new generation of children into his home at the end of the day's sealing and teach them their letters and the Catechism.

Here is how one early missionary, Hans Egede Saabye, recruited catechists to teach the children in his vicinity and to preach the gospel to outlying communities.

> "As soon as my acquaintance with the Greenlanders and their language in some measure permitted it, I endeavoured to qualify a young Greenlander to become a national Catechist, and allowed him a certain salary. . . . This successful attempt induced me to instruct some more of the young men of my place of abode [Claushavn] . . .
>
> "In this manner, I sent, some years afterwards, a national Catechist to some families, who settled a quarter of a mile to the north of me. The Catechist, who was the son of a deceased Dane of mixed race, was tolerably clever, and could dedicate the greatest part of his time to his office, because he had not much success in fishing; but it was necessary, on this account, to give him a larger salary, that he might not suffer want, and from want become indifferent to his office." (Saabye, 1818, pp. 108–9).

Saabye, a namesake and grandson of Hans Egede, lived and taught in Claushavn from 1770 to 1778. In the book he wrote subsequently he described his little school in these words:

> "From nine o'clock in the morning, till two in the afternoon, I was employed in giving instruction every day except Saturday. The little ones soon learnt their letters, and endeavoured to advance farther; the bigger ones were divided into classes, according to their abilities and knowledge, and all learnt by heart, after they got home, the lesson which had been explained to them. By way of change, the latter wrote some hours every day, and, as the room was so confined, I was forced to let some read while others wrote, and the first again write while the latter read. At the age of eleven, at the most of twelve, and, sometimes, of ten, they could read any printed Greenland book readily and fluently . . . they often wrote letters to each other, nay even to me . . . In their thirteenth year, or when they were thirteen years old, they were discharged from the school, till they were afterwards to be instructed for the purpose of being confirmed. In doing this, there was nothing to fear; the daily examination at the hour of prayer was our security, that they would never forget what they had learned." (Saabye, 1818, pp. 214–6).

A few of Saabye's pupils seem to have been younger than ten years, for when the snow was deep their fathers sometimes carried them to school and home again. They were very eager to learn, the missionary says, and received every encouragement from their parents. To have the instruction come to them in their own language, in many, perhaps most cases from their own people, must have banished the shyness so characteristic of Eskimo children, delivered them from the fatigue of trying to comprehend and memorize lessons given in a totally alien tongue, speeded up their progress and made them look upon school as a pastime rather than a wearisome task. The administrator and scholar Rink remarked a hundred years after Saabye's day:

> "Scarcely any country exists where children are so ready to receive school instruction as in Greenland; it is almost considered more a diversion than a duty." (Rink, 1877, p. 216).

The teaching at the Moravian missions closely resembled the Lutherans',[1] but stressed more strongly, apparently, the memorization of religious texts; for a writer at the end of the eighteenth century reported that

> "Whereas not one of the Greenlanders of the Moravian Mission is able to read writing, and only very few can read a book, all of the converts of the Danish mission can read and many even write intelligibly." (Ostermann, 1929b, p. 318).

Greenland school-children of the eighteenth century were obviously not harassed by many subjects, or burdened with many school-books. They studied, indeed, one subject only, reading and writing their own language, and were aided by only two books, a small primer of short texts composed in Eskimo by Hans Egede, and a Lutheran Catechism which the same missionary translated into that tongue. To these the later years of the century added three others, namely, translations of parts of the Bible, a Church Ritual, and a collection of Hymns. Since no money circulated until the second half of the nineteenth century, and commercial transactions that are limited to simple barter do not require abstruse calculations, arithmetic had no place in the curriculum, even though in Egede's day many Eskimos were still counting on their fingers and lacked words in their dialect for any number above twenty. And despite repeated protests during the late nineteenth century that ignorance of the Danish tongue was holding back the development of the Greenlanders, it was not until the twentieth century that this subject was taught in any school except the two seminaries founded in 1846, one at Godthåb in south Greenland and the other at Jakobshavn in Disko Bugt.[2] Danish officialdom—and Europeans generally—seem to have carried far too long the infection of that myth which classified all non-European peoples as inferior; and even after the myth had lost most of its virulence officialdom continued to defend the exclusion of Danish studies from Greenland schools on the pretext that the island's official language was Eskimo, that very few of its natives ever visited Denmark or entered into direct relations with Europe, and that the hour had not yet struck when the quarantine which protected them from exploitation could safely be lifted and free them to carve out their own path—with Danish assistance of course—in a not always friendly world. This explains why after 150 years of Danish rule Rink, Director of the Royal Greenland Trade from 1871 to 1882 and the island's second "father", could declare:

> "the Greenlanders are very disinclined to learn Danish. Hardly 1 per cent. of them is able to speak a few words and probably not 2 per cent. can understand it in the least." (Rink, 1877, p. 198).

No one in the eighteenth century, we may be sure, and perhaps no one in the nineteenth, would have believed that Greenland could become what she is

[1] Cf. the account by the Moravian Crantz: "About nine, the children have a meeting for catechisation. From thence they proceed to school, the girls to a married missionary, and the boys to the catechist, whose school is also frequented by some young men, who either wish to improve in reading and writing, or to assist in teaching the younger children. . . . In the afternoon no school is kept, as the missionaries are then otherwise engaged, and the children assist their parents in domestic affairs. The boys must also have some time to practise rowing the kajak, or darting the harpoon." (Crantz, 1820, vol. 2, pp. 213, 224).

[2] The Jakobshavn seminary was closed in 1875, re-established in 1901, and abandoned again about 1905 (Ostermann, 1929b, pp. 339, 345).

today, a province of Denmark that elects her own representatives to sit with representatives from Jutland and other provinces in the parliament at Copenhagen. Right down to the First World War she lay isolated and remote in the North Atlantic, far outside the main currents of world migration and trade, and accessible in summer only after a long and often dangerous sea-journey. If, therefore, the educational system which the first missionaries devised for its Eskimos appears to our twentieth century eyes absurdly elementary and grossly over-weighted on the religious side, we should not brush it scornfully aside, but should ask ourselves whether it was really much inferior to the schooling available to our own peasant forefathers in Denmark, England, and other European countries, before the industrial revolution broke over them at the beginning of the nineteenth century and necessitated greater and more widespread learning and skills than the world had yet demanded.

Furthermore, it is very clear today that the missionaries' humble school system contained the magic hormone that promotes speedy and vigorous growth; for their educational seed sprouted immediately, and accomplished within a century not only all that they had hoped from it, but far more than they could ever have anticipated. In spite of the overbearing and at times almost brutal attitude of its earliest exponents, including Hans Egede himself, it choked and killed the paganism which had prevailed over the whole west coast when the first colonists landed in Godthåb Fjord, then after an unhappy period of adjustment replaced it with a simple Christianity which offered more shelter from life's storms, more hope, and perhaps more contentment. It abolished illiteracy, opening thereby a doorway to a larger and previously unsuspected world, and by its swift training of Eskimo (and half-breed) teachers and preachers it prepared the ground and created the climate for the steady growth of a native clergy, and a body of educationalists, worthy of rank beside those of Denmark itself. Today Greenland supports a separate church affiliated with Denmark's Lutheran Church, and can point to native scholars and native artists whose names are known in many lands.

The educational seed which Egede sowed more than two centuries ago fell upon fertile soil and has grown into a flourishing tree. Future historians may indeed claim, with considerable justification, that without the protection of that tree a unique branch of the human stock might have gone down to oblivion.

CHAPTER 2

Trade versus welfare: 1775–1870

The half-century that ended in 1775 firmly established Danish sovereignty over west Greenland, but it revealed, rather unexpectedly, that the island's resources were apparently so limited, the navigation hazards for sailing vessels so great, and trade so risky, that private capital dared not involve itself deeply in the region without political support and heavy subsidies from the government. Official Denmark therefore took the only step that seemed logical: she fenced off the island from her own nationals as well as from other nations, took into her own hands both its trade and its administration, and thenceforward made it a proving-ground of her economic and social philosophy, or, to be more exact, of the philosophy of her leaders.

The essence of this philosophy shines through the trade *Instructions* which Denmark issued in 1782, instructions which constituted a genuine Magna Carta or Bill of Rights for the island's Eskimos. At its root lay the conception of the Noble Savage which Jean-Jacques Rousseau had been propagating throughout western Europe during the two previous decades. His doctrine had made little impact on Denmark's trading fraternity, but in the opinion of Mr. Mads Lidegaard,[1] it profoundly influenced two or three politicians at the royal court, who persuaded the King that Denmark should not wantonly destroy the culture of her sturdy Hyperboreans, but should strive to keep them Greenlanders, free from the corruptions that had crept into the world of European civilization. Accordingly the government, assuming—as perhaps it had every right to assume, considering the low standards of living and the low incomes of Europeans at that time—that the resources of Greenland and of its surrounding waters, if rigidly safe-guarded and efficiently exploited, should be able to defray the costs of a benevolent administration as well as all trading expenses, laid down this fundamental principle, that the *welfare of the Eskimos should receive the highest possible consideration, even override when necessary the interests of trade itself.*

The details of the *Instructions* gave concrete expression to this principle. They prohibited white men in Greenland, particularly the crews of whaling ships and the employees of the trading posts, from trading with the Eskimos privately or visiting their homes without permission,[2] and they set forth heavy penalties for debauching the natives with alcoholic liquor, tea, or anything else that might disorganize their way of life or impair their health. They allowed none but elderly women selected by the trader or the missionary to work for trading-post employees or the wintering crews of the whaling ships; and they

[1]Personal communication.

[2]The sailor who visited the house or tent of an Eskimo without permission was liable to a punishment of twenty-four lashes from a rope's end.

condemned the white father of any illegitimate child to pay its mother six rigsdaler annually for its maintenance until it reached the age of twelve. Every trader was to set a good example to his men, and to the Eskimos, by attending divine service and morning and evening prayers. He was to be the protector and mentor of the natives who sold him their produce, supervise their arrangements with the whalers, increase their output of blubber and other trade goods by encouraging their dispersal to the best sealing-grounds at the proper season[1] and by improving, wherever possible, their techniques; and he was to urge them to protect the diminishing colonies of eider-ducks whose down had become a valuable article of commerce. One further regulation, equally well-intentioned, made the Royal Greenland Trade responsible for relieving all distress in Greenland. To meet this obligation the Royal Greenland Trade set up a carefully planned poor-relief program which produced, unhappily, the same side-effect as many a refugee camp of the present day: it sapped the energy of a considerable part of the population and helped to create what could justly be named a proletarian rabble.

Let us consider some of the implications of Denmark's economic policy. The government's control of all administration and trade, its virtual insulation of the island from contact with any Europeans except its own employees and the rare, semi-official visitor, and its arbitrary determination of all domestic prices for incoming and out-going goods,[2] produced in this sub-marginal, undeveloped region a purely artificial economy which could depend to a very large extent on the outside world, yet escape the booms and depressions, the lurking inflations and the other tribulations which commonly assail more open economies. It could not ward off the invasions of epidemics such as smallpox, or prevent the introduction of nearly every sickness that was afflicting the civilized world of that day; but by taking advantage of Greenland's cold climate, the sparseness of its population, its irregular communications and its long, isolating winter, it could hold these evils at bay and check their ravages

[1]The Moravians greatly disliked this regulation. Cf. "A contemporary order directed that the Greenlanders should divide themselves into smaller parties during the winter, instead of living together in one place; an arrangement which occasioned much additional labour and anxiety to the missionaries, and was, in many respects, highly prejudicial to the spiritual welfare of their flock. To obviate the want of regular instruction, they were necessitated to maintain a visiting correspondence with the different stations, situated, for the most part, at the distance of ten miles or upwards from the settlements, besides appointing one or two native assistants to reside with each company. At two of the most considerable of these *out-places*, houses were afterwards built for the accommodation of a missionary and his wife, during the winter, in order that the ministries of religion and the education of the children might be more fully provided for. The utility of this plan was obvious, but insurmountable obstacles arose which led to its abandonment. By degrees, the converts themselves became aware of the injury done to their souls, by their dispersion and long absence from their teachers; many on this account refused to leave the settlements in future, and the greater part of those who had removed to the several provision-places returned in a few years." (Crantz, 1820, vol. 2, p. 261).

[2]In 1861 "The Royal Greenland Trading Company charged no profit for fire-arms and ropes; for provisions, groceries and goods in commission a profit was charged of 20 per cent, except for coffee, the profit of which was 32 per cent; for cottons and some wools, hardware and tobacco 30 per cent; for china and glass as well as various luxuries 46 per cent; for tin ware, all sorts of tools, tubs, knives. wooden articles and paper only 12 per cent." (Bobé, 1929, p. 158). A century later the Hudson's Bay Company followed a similar policy in northern Canada, where it sold the Eskimos such basic goods as guns, ammunition, traps, and certain foods at greatly reduced prices (Jenness, 1964, p. 165).

more effectively, perhaps, than could governments of a less authoritarian character.

Such a closed economy, then, offered Greenland considerable benefits; but it possessed one grave defect. It condemned the Greenlanders to a state of perpetual tutelage, confined them inside an economic and sociological hothouse which sheltered them, temporarily at least, from the harsh winds of the world beyond their borders, but debarred them from learning how to adjust themselves to those winds should ever the walls of their hothouse collapse and expose them to civilization's perilous gusts.

Denmark realized this defect, and the risks she was incurring by tightly shutting Greenland's doors. She could not sweep aside the mists concealing the years ahead and discover whether she would still be guiding the island's destinies a generation later, a century later, or perhaps even a full millennium. It was not her mission to star-gaze into the unknown future, to anticipate a hypothetical tomorrow by attempting to transmute the Greenlanders into Danes today. Her task, as she saw it, was to civilize them and to keep them Eskimos, prosperous and contented in their own land, happy with their own simple way of life.

What other mission, indeed, could she contemplate? At that period, the close of the eighteenth century, the doctrine that the white race was superior to all others still maintained its grip on the western world. Europeans conceded that the liberté, égalité, et fraternité which were agitating France might ultimately reign over their whole continent, but considered it rank folly to imagine that a people like the Eskimos, who had failed to progress beyond the stone age, could ever gain real equality with themselves. Why then should Denmark expend money and effort in a futile attempt to raise them to that level?

The Danish Lutheran church, and its mission in Greenland, subscribed to this narrow doctrine as strongly as the laity (see pp. 18, 28):

> "When in 1804 it was demanded on the part of the administration that Danish should be thoroughly taught, the authorities of the Greenland church and school opposed it. When we ask for the reason of this attitude . . . it seems to be beyond a doubt that behind it all there was a certain contempt for the Greenlanders. They had no use for a knowledge of Danish; they got on very well without it, and no one at that time thought of actually developing the native population." (Schultz-Lorentzen, 1929, p. 353).[1]

Denmark accordingly set her sights on a different goal. She aimed to create in her arctic colony a Garden of Eden where happiness would come through isolation and paternal rule. The Greenlanders would remain Greenlanders, fellow-Christians, and partners of Danes in life's adventure, but junior partners only.

During the six years that preceded the issue of the *Instructions*, a Danish naval craft had patrolled the west coast of Greenland to deter smugglers and other unauthorized vessels from approaching its shores, and the government

[1]Rink wrote in 1877 "The same contempt with which white men look down upon other races has amply manifested itself in his intercourse with the Eskimo. It has been asserted a hundred years ago, that in Greenland the worst Dane was considered better than the best Greenlander; and this may be so even occasionally now." ('Memoirs of Hans Hendrik', 1878, p. 4).

had entrusted the administration and trade of the island to a hastily improvised company, the Royal Greenland Trade, which it was now in process of reorganizing. This company's predecessor, the privately owned and operated General Trading Company, had succeeded in declaring satisfactory dividends only through an increase in the government's subsidy and a drastic reduction in its expenditures on the missions. It had tried to revive the once profitable whaling industry based on Holsteinsborg; but that venture had failed, and the competition from foreign whalers had intensified rather than slackened.

In spite of these unfavourable auguries the Royal Greenland Trade now undertook to rejuvenate the whaling industry, and between 1775 and 1781, with the support of Denmark's Prime Minister, it carried out no fewer than 120 whaling and sealing operations in the waters of Davis Strait and Spitsbergen. The gamble succeeded. In 1777 the unusually heavy ice which blockaded both the east and the west coasts of Greenland almost obliterated Denmark's principal rivals, the whaling fleets of Hamburg and Holland, but left their own fleet intact, to face one competitor only, the English fleet. Encouraged by this turn of fate the Royal Greenland Trade redoubled its effort, and by 1781 could point to a thriving industry that controlled eleven whaling and trading stations in west Greenland, a fleet of nineteen sealing and whaling vessels, and a train-oil factory with accompanying warehouses just outside Copenhagen.

These were the company's assets in 1781 when the Danish government, more eager than ever to monopolize the whaling and trading in the North Atlantic between Davis Strait and Russia, endowed it with a capital of one million rigsdaler and re-framed it into one of three departments—the others were the Iceland-Finmark Department and the Faroes Department—operating independently of each other under a common Board of Directors that included two Treasury officials empowered to report directly to the King. Each department was administered by a Managing Director from an office in Copenhagen; and under the Managing Director for Greenland, conformably with the 1782 *Instructions*, the west coast of Greenland was divided into two provinces and supervised by two "Royal Inspectors of Whaling and Trade", one stationed in the southern province at Godthåb, the other in the northern province at Godhavn in Disko Bugt (see Table 12). On these two offiicals, more perhaps than on the Managing Director himself, rested the task of expanding the island's trade, promoting the whaling industry, supporting education and the Lutheran missions, and protecting the native population. The Managing Director and his Board provided the finances, laid down the broad lines of policy, attended to Greenland's interests in Europe, marketed her exports there, and purchased and forwarded her imports, but it was the two field inspectors who steered the daily course of Greenland's barque.

The two officials held equal rank, and reported independently to the Managing Director. Each enjoyed very wide authority, being left to his own initiative during the long winter when the ice floes severed all communication with the home office. As his major task he supervised the trade in his part of the island, for which purpose the first inspectors carried with them from Denmark standard measures, ledgers, and lists of the prices their head office had fixed for all imported and exported goods[1]—the 'tools' wherewith each man could check the operations of his subordinates and protect the unsophisticated

[1]At this period the head office fixed the prices for one year only.

Greenlanders from exploitation. Each inspector exercised some control, also, over the missionaries in his province, who often called upon his traders for transportation along the coast, though they were subject in ecclesiastical matters only to the Mission College in Denmark.[1] Furthermore, he was the highest judicial authority within his inspectorate, the guardian of law and order from whom neither Dane nor Greenlander could appeal except to Copenhagen. His influence weighed heavily in Copenhagen itself, for it was the dispatches forwarded by each inspector to the Managing Director which provided the home government with detailed accounts of what was happening in Greenland, unveiled the successes and failures of Denmark's policies, and pointed the way to necessary changes.

Naturally, it was the legal code of Denmark itself which governed the relations of Greenland's Europeans with one another. But what code was Denmark to apply to the natives? Their stone-age economy had known no 'laws' except unwritten custom, and that was of little help in their dealings with whites, who were unlikely to accept its validity save when it was momentarily expedient.

Let us glance at one of these unwritten customs which cemented together the families of the pre-European Eskimos and helped their little communities to maintain friendly relations with one another. During the long centuries of their isolation they had evolved the practice of holding in common the land over which they roamed, their dwellings, food, and other material things which most people separate into individual possessions. Private ownership was a category which the early Greenlanders reserved only for the clothing, the tools, and the utensils which each man (or woman) made with his own hands from materials acquired directly from nature herself, and worked up for his personal use or for the use of some member of his immediate family. Even of these things his ownership was not absolute: a neighbour might borrow his sled without permission, use his adze and break it—though not of course maliciously—without offering compensation. In a society of this nature a man could still be wealthy: he could own an extra suit of clothes, for example, more sled dogs than his neighbours, even three wives, if he possessed the energy and the courage to maintain them all in the same home. But he juggled no coins or bank notes with his countrymen, never spent a sleepless night worrying about overdrafts or other financial transactions that had miscarried, never wrestled with the details of estates and property-management or dreamed up the swindling and other crimes that today occupy the attention of civilization's legal fraternities. His society, therefore, did not need the multitudinous statutes and enactments that fill the pages of our legal textbooks and confuse the minds of uninitiated laymen.

Not that crime was completely unknown in old Greenland society. In all ages and in all countries man has been by nature deeply emotional, and the Eskimo yielded to his passions no less than the rest of us. In his seemingly transparent communities jealousies over women, desire for influence and prestige, resentment at insults and fear of witchcraft provoked a higher percentage

[1] In 1770 the government had instructed the Royal Greenland Trade to provide the Danish Lutheran missionaries with whatever transportation they needed to inspect their districts; but the company gave its individual traders wide latitude to choose periods that would serve their own convenience rather than the convenience or desires of the missionaries. Cf. Ostermann, 1929b, p. 316.

of murders than disturb our modern cities; and in the absence of law-courts and prisons the only protection the individual could contrive for himself, the only penalty he could impose, was the blood-feud, which often continued from generation to generation and victimized the innocent far more than the guilty.

In those early days the rigours of arctic life produced a second custom, infanticide, which we Europeans consider a form of murder and therefore criminal, but the primitive Eskimos fighting nature with their backs to the wall adjudged so venial, and in many cases so necessary, that they let it pass unnoticed. So small and confined was their world indeed, that the west Greenlanders did not know their land was an island on whose east coast, beyond the inland ice, lived other people of their own race; and the small tribe of Thule or Polar Eskimos in the Smith Sound region believed themselves to be the only human beings on this earth, apart from three or four families of close kin who dwelt on the other side of Ellesmere Island. Yet, small as was this world, each group of Eskimos filled it with supernatural creatures, seldom visible to human eyes but almost without exception hostile. So even a stranger from only two hundred miles away could seem a potential enemy, a non-human being perhaps in disguise, and he could be stabbed to death with impunity.

The Danish colonization of Greenland mitigated many of the privations of this earlier life and abolished such harsh customs as infanticide and the blood-feud; but many others lingered on well into the nineteenth century, long after every native on Greenland's west coast had embraced Christianity, at least nominally. Extinct, but still vividly remembered on that coast when the nineteenth century opened, and still prevalent a hundred years later at Angmagssalik in east Greenland, was the practice of summoning a whole community to arbitrate between two litigants, who publicly fought out their quarrel not with knives (although that might happen later), but in song and dance. The opponents faced one another inside a circle of their peers, and each in turn pounded a drum and danced to an improvised song which voiced his own grievances and mercilessly blackened the character and conduct of his adversary. The audience acclaimed the winner by the vigour of its applause, and the gathering dispersed, or merged in a general song and dance, with the litigants generally accepting the verdict and willing to become friends again.[1]

Denmark knew of these "nith-song contests" and of the role they played in settling minor disputes; but she knew also that law-courts so embryonic could never prepare the Greenlanders to understand and accept the complicated provisions of the Danish Criminal Code, and she was not ready at that time to draw up an alternative one. Consequently, in the *Instructions* she issued in 1782, she provided the inspectors and their subordinate traders with but one directive, namely:

> "If any Greenlander should be found guilty of unseemly behaviour such as theft or other gross misdemeanour, the trading agent, as gently as possible, should make him desist therefrom. If this avail not or the offence be particularly gross, he will be punished according to circumstances and the 'nature of the crime'." (Lindow, 1929, pp. 55–6).

[1]There can be little doubt that these singing contests developed from a still older custom, current among the Eskimos of America's Western Arctic down to the First World War, of composing in crude verse, and setting to old tunes, sketchy accounts of unusual events that had occurred in the very recent past and then disseminating these "news-items" at winter dances. Cf. Roberts and Jenness, 1925, p. 12.

The government in Copenhagen was by no means satisfied with this regulation, however, because it gave the individual trader more authority than he could safely be entrusted with, and sixteen years later, in 1798, it seriously weighed the feasibility of annulling it and applying the laws of Denmark to every resident of Greenland, Danes and natives alike. With this in mind it issued a Royal Statute requesting advice on what laws the Greenlanders actually needed, and how such laws might be enforced, and it suggested the possibility of having responsible natives participate in all trials affecting their own people. The Statute resulted in the collection of much valuable information concerning the resources of Greenland and the manners and customs of its aborigines, but failed to produce any significant change in the administration itself. Denmark realized, indeed, that she was maintaining far too few officials in the country to exercise firm control over its natives, whose goodwill she dared not forfeit, and she feared that the Greenlanders themselves, though they had now abandoned their ancient paganism and accepted the Christianity of their rulers, were still too attached to their ancient pattern of life and its social institutions, still too ignorant of Danish ways of living and of thinking, to be capable of comprehending the regulations that governed the relations of the Danes with one another and preserved peace in communities of white men. So she let the regulation stand.

Numerous misunderstandings must have arisen between the two races, therefore, during the long effort to impose such elementary European notions as private ownership of real estate on Eskimos who had always lived in multi-family dwellings, shared their food with one another, and disclaimed all property except the clothes they wore on their backs and the hand-made tools, weapons and household utensils that served them in their daily tasks; yet until Hinrik Rink organized the compilation of a code of Greenland 'customary law' three-quarters of a century later, the vague clause quoted above from the 1782 *Instructions* continued to be the only penal code applicable to the native population. That population, though small, was scattered over a long coastline in tiny settlements, many of which were seasonally unoccupied and frequently inaccessible. The *Instructions* invested each local trader with authority analogous to that of a justice of the peace, a very questionable procedure at the end of the eighteenth century when it was still extremely difficult to recruit capable and conscientious traders, or to maintain close supervision over each settlement. Conflicts of interest were bound to arise whenever the harvest of blubber and other products was disappointing, trade slack, and the Greenlanders poorly provided with the supplies they needed for the coming winter. In such seasons the linkage of trade with the administration of justice was particularly dangerous, because the trader's pitifully small income rose and fell with the vicissitudes of his exports, from whose value he was entitled to a small percentage; and the legal authority he now enjoyed strongly weighted the balance in favour of trade at the expense of justice and the Greenlanders' welfare. Justice did lapse at times into sheer arbitrariness—of that there can be no question; that abuses of authority were not more frequent we must probably credit to the early inspectors, who quickly established control over their subordinates and brought order and uniformity into the relations between Danes and Greenlanders. Even when no inspector was at hand to arbitrate disputes, or to investigate misdemeanours and pronounce judgements, the presence of an

independent missionary or a catechist in every important community must have helped to check gross injustices; and with increasing racial intermixture, and an improvement in the calibre and salaries of the traders, serious abuses of authority became exceedingly rare. Nevertheless, no administration, however conscientious, could allay the dissatisfaction of the Greenlanders at their subjection to ordinances and rules of conduct which in many cases flatly contradicted the time-honoured customs handed down to them by their forefathers; and from 1800 onward a deep apathy and gloom laid hold of them, until at the mid-century they presented the appearance of "a people with no education, no stake in their country, no chance of material prosperity and no hope".

Denmark succeeded in enforcing her rule on land more easily than at sea, where foreign whalers, nearly all of them now English, flouted her authority and stirred up considerable disorder along the coast, especially in the area around Disko Bugt. They paid no attention to the territorial boundary four miles offshore which Denmark had unilaterally proclaimed in 1759,[1] thumbed their noses at the Danish patrol vessel, and plied the Greenlanders with gin to lure from them everything of value, even the fur coats on their backs.

> "As late as 1787 there were more than sixty English and seven Dutch vessels in the bay, and the Greenlanders were greatly attracted by the splendid merchandise of the English—beads, china, silk ribbons, flannel shirts etc—and adultery, immorality, drinking and thefts became the order of the day. On one vessel some natives, both men and women, were taken onboard; they were given drink until they became utterly senseless, and then were landed on a desert island. When the inspectors went on their rounds, they everywhere found drunken Greenlanders lying about on the rocks. Time after time they reported that unless the iniquities of the foreigners were checked by a 'dictatorial command' on the part of the Government, the Danish trade and whaling would perish." (Bobé, 1929, p. 138).

The Danish government, however, dared not take strong action, partly because its employees in Greenland sometimes ran short of supplies and were forced to purchase their needs from the foreign vessels, but mainly because it saw the war-clouds that were gathering over Europe and, fearing the might of England's fleet, desired more than all else to maintain friendly relations with that country.

During the last two decades of the eighteenth century blubber commanded so high a price in Europe that Greenland's trade with Denmark flourished in spite of interference from foreign interlopers. Then the Napoleonic wars engulfed the little Baltic country, the destruction of her shipyards during the English bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 shattered her lines of navigation in the North Sea and brought on her a depression which did not recede until the mid 1820's.

The same war brought dire hardship to Greenland also. From the outbreak of hostilities in 1807, when only one out of six homeward-bound vessels laden with Greenland products escaped the pursuit of English privateers and docked in Copenhagen, communications with Europe became so hazardous and infrequent that the island could ship no further exports until 1817; and during the ten years from 1807 to 1817 it received from Denmark so few supplies that

[1]Rasmussen, 1929, p. 21 and Bobé, 1929, p. 138.

it was forced to purchase many of its necessities from accommodating English ships. Most of its coastal boats fell into disrepair through lack of lumber, several localities ran short of ammunition, the whaling staff at Upernavik exhausted its stocks of food and fuel and abandoned that station, the seamen at Godhavn deserted to the English, and at Umanak in 1812 an unknown but very infectious disease carried off 149 persons. Distress reigned everywhere, not among the Europeans only, although they of course suffered most, but among those native Greenlanders who had lost, or never acquired, the ancient hunting skills of their forefathers and were unable to support themselves from the local fish and game. Both whaling and fishing declined, the buildings of the Royal Greenland Trade fell into decay, and most of its employees were as poorly clothed as the natives. White workmen and Greenlanders alike lived in stone-and-sod hovels with dirt floors and gut-skin windows, heated by stone lamps burning large quantities of blubber that previously would have been exported, lamps which often gave off an acrid smoke that produced a painful inflammation of the eyes. Sanitation was unknown, and skin diseases widely prevalent owing to the unclean homes and perhaps deficiencies in diet. In every settlement, too, morale was at a very low ebb, among the native Greenlanders because Danish workmen monopolized what little employment was available, among the Danish workers because life was hard, wages insignificant, and European goods in very short supply. In 1816 the last of the Lutheran missionaries withdrew to Denmark,[1] leaving at Godthåb, once the most prosperous settlement in south Greenland but at that date the poorest, only a native clergyman whom he himself had ordained a short time before. Worst of all, throughout the war and for several years after, the Copenhagen directors of the Royal Greenland Trade mishandled or lost control of the situation, and both at home and abroad allowed corruption to invade the ranks of their ill-paid employees and gravely damage the company's operations.

> "Illicit trading was carried on to the greatest possible extent by the local traders, in conjunction with the crews of vessels and the employées of the company at Copenhagen. Everyone on board, from the captain to the cabin boy, profited whenever there was a chance; even the workmen at the train-oil factory with their low wages were able to retire as house-owners and capitalists in a small way." (Bobé, 1929, pp. 146–7).

As in Denmark, so in Greenland, conditions greatly improved after 1825, when the Danish government appointed as managing director of the company a very able official, J. H. Gedde. He tightened the discipline, revised the navigation programs and some of the trading techniques, restocked the Greenland settlements with more, cheaper, and better goods than they had been receiving earlier, and in the last five years of his eighteen years of office not

[1]Ostermann (1929b, pp. 332–4) says that Denmark sent out new missionaries one year later. He explains, too, why the Moravians escaped the hardships of the Lutherans:

"The Moravian mission suffered no interruption during the war, and its missionaries all remained at their posts. They were never alone, as there were always several Brethren at the stations, and they also had their private stores, which were always large and even during the war were supplemented by fellow-believers in Holland and England, and so they were entirely independent of the settlements and of the ships with provisions from Denmark. . . .

"Upon the whole the long strife between the two missions was now at an end . . . the relation between the two missions was, on the whole, good, each keeping within its bounds and respecting the work and working methods of the other." (p. 334).

only balanced the company's accounts, despite the discontinuance of the government subsidy, but paid large profits into the Danish Treasury. For a few years then life for both Greenlanders and Danes became somewhat easier, at least outwardly.

This new economic prosperity, due in part to efficient administration and in part also to the strong demand and high prices that seal-oil and whale-oil continued to enjoy during those years, revived an argument that had arisen forty years before, when the Danish government, at the suggestion of the Treasury, had set up a commission to consider ways and means for making the Greenland trade more profitable. One member of that commission, an Icelandic merchant named Carl Pontoppidan, believed that private enterprise would gladly undertake the Greenland trade again if it were given the capital and some of the privileges (e.g. exemption from duties) that the government had granted the Royal Greenland Trade, and if it were allowed also sufficient time to educate and train the natives of Greenland so that they might take over most of the duties for which the Royal Greenland Trade was recruiting Danes. Such a policy, he claimed, would benefit the natives, a "still quite uncivilized and roaming people, without laws or currency" (Bobé, 1929, p. 140), would banish the need for a government quarantine and trade monopoly, and in the fullness of time would make Greenland and its inhabitants equal in status to his own country, Iceland.

Pontoppidan's arguments found little acceptance during his lifetime, but in 1834 some merchants resuscitated them in a petition to the King requesting the abolition of the rigid trade monopoly, and the full or partial opening-up of Greenland to free enterprise. The King referred their petition to the Royal Greenland Trade—the "Trade", as it was commonly called; and when that body failed to agree he appointed a commission to study the whole question and recommend how best to open up the island, should that appear the desirable course. The commission, after several years of study, issued two reports, one expressing the opinions of the majority, the other the opinions of the minority. These two documents, published together in 1840, exposed more clearly than ever before the perplexities of the problem, and silently attested the high-mindedness of the merchants and officials whom Denmark had called in for economic and political advice.

The minority of the commissioners stressed the view, widely held in the Europe of that day, that a trade monopoly is by its very nature harmful; and they pointed out that some of its ills had manifested themselves even in so isolated a country as Greenland, where the government's monopolistic agency, the Trade, was grievously exploiting the inhabitants by fixing too low a price —two rigsdaler a barrel—on their main product, blubber, and charging for their purchases of European goods prices that were relatively far too high. Moreover, it was handing over all its profits to the Danish Treasury when it ought to be ploughing them back into the island to increase production and trade, or, what was more important still, to promote the welfare of the inhabitants, as demanded by the spirit of the *Instructions* which the government had formulated half a century before, although not perhaps by their actual wording. The Commission's minority therefore recommended that the trade monopoly be abolished, that the quarantine on Greenland be lifted, and that private enterprise be permitted to apply the goad of competition to raise the

prices of blubber and other products, expand the trade, and improve the living conditions of the Greenlanders.

In the carrying-out of these recommendations, however, the minority advocated caution. It pointed out that free trade too could generate abuses, especially in a country like Greenland where the ignorance and poverty of the people made them ready prey to unscrupulous whites. It might encourage over-hunting, thereby reducing the number of seals on which the Greenlanders depended for their daily food; it might increase alcoholism by placing intoxicants within easier reach; and it might promote the spread of venereal and other diseases. However, the minority was of the opinion that these and similar dangers might be avoided at the outset by leasing to private individuals exclusive trading rights in a few settlements only, and then adding other settlements as the years went by, instead of opening wide the gates to all districts simultaneously before the inhabitants had learned to adjust themselves to the competitive, materialistic world of European commerce. Even a limited acquaintance with the ways of that world could benefit the Greenlanders by leading them a few steps farther along the path to western civilization.

All the members of the commission agreed that Denmark should lay down as her ultimate goal the separation of Greenland's trade from its administration, the abolition of the monopoly and the opening up of the trade to private enterprise; but the majority maintained that the time for so far-reaching a change had not yet come. Although more than a century had elapsed since Egede had founded the first Danish colony in Greenland, trade had not advanced even yet beyond the stage of barter, and the natives themselves had progressed so little that, if the government should now decide to throw down every trade barrier,

> "They would as a rule neither be able to read and write or reckon, and as they have no idea of money, they would constantly be cheated by those they traded with, and there was hardly any means to right them, seeing that the proof as to the injustice done to them, which the State was bound to require, would rarely be forthcoming." (Sveistrup, 1949, pp. 92–3).

It was clear then, argued the majority, that the Greenlanders were not yet ready for commercial freedom; for many years longer they would need to shelter under the government's wings. Yet although it opposed the immediate abolition of the monopoly, it agreed with the minority that the profits from the trade should not be handed to the Treasury, but used to advance the material and intellectual welfare of the Greenland people.

Now in 1834, the year before the appointment of this Royal Commission, the government had burned its fingers rather painfully in an experiment with private enterprise that went awry. It had licensed two merchants to open a trading station at Isortoq, near Holsteinsborg, and to hire Greenlanders from that district to hunt whales and seals, and to catch sharks and cod. The licensees, however, had by-passed Isortoq without authorization, built their station in a different locality, and in other ways failed to live up to their agreement. Then, in 1841, after inflicting considerable losses on their competitor, the Royal Greenland Trade, and greatly impoverishing the surrounding population, they had surrendered their charter to the crown against a substantial payment and moved out.

The government was still smarting from this experiment when the commission made public its report. Without delay it re-affirmed the decision it had reached in Pontoppidan's day, namely, to protect the Greenlanders until they were fully capable of taking care of themselves; and following the advice of the commission's majority, it refused to lift the quarantine on Greenland or, for a period purposely undefined, to open up any part of the coast again to private enterprise.

Yet the commission's labours were not altogether barren. Denmark's official outlook had broadened a little during the forty years since Pontoppidan had advocated a course exactly opposite to the one she now re-affirmed. At the beginning of the nineteenth century she had believed that the Greenland trade, efficiently managed, would be capable of defraying the expenses not of the island's administration alone, but of its economic and cultural development, which meant, of course, the education and welfare of its inhabitants. Naturally, during the upheaval of the Napoleonic wars and for several years afterwards, the trade had done neither; but from about 1825 onward it had yielded a fairly continuous profit which covered all purely administrative costs, presumably, but either left no surplus for development, or a surplus that was not applied to that purpose but was swallowed up by the Danish Treasury. By 1840, however, the government had come to realize how scanty Greenland's resources really were, and it was ready to modify its previous view that they could sustain an enduring and highly lucrative commerce. It therefore accepted the advice of its Royal Commission, and proclaimed that henceforth it would cease to divert any profits from the Greenland trade to its Treasury, but would use them solely for the benefit of the Greenlanders.

This announcement carried considerable significance, at the time perhaps not fully realized. It implicitly rejected the argument, advanced by certain contemporary merchants who were advocating freer trade with Greenland, that *a nation has the right to expect some financial profit from its colonies*; and it substituted for that distinctly mercantile theory another that may be equally one-sided, but is widely upheld today as more altrustic and more just, namely, that *a nation which claims possession of a territory must shoulder the responsibility of promoting the welfare of the inhabitants of that territory, even though the task may prove onerous and bring to the ruling country no financial or other advantages.*

The Royal Commission set up in 1835, then, failed to promote that freer trade between Greenland and Denmark which some of its supporters had hoped from it; and in Greenland itself it brought no major changes, but only the few minor ones I shall now mention, some of which seem to reflect Denmark's heightened assessment of her obligation to the Greenlanders.

In 1836, within twelve months of the appointment of the commission, the government raised the Greenland price for blubber from two rigsdaler to three, without correspondingly increasing the prices of the European goods it was shipping to the island; and in 1844, shortly after the commission's dissolution, it raised the price of blubber again, this time to four rigsdaler.[1] In 1836 also it tried to lure government-employed Greenlanders out of their stone and mud huts by supplying them with wooden houses and iron stoves at prices far below

[1]At the same time it raised the prices it was paying for sealskins, fox-skins, and other Greenland products.

cost; and when even those prices seemed beyond their means it offered them interest-free loans, Disko coal at prices less than production cost, and other concessions. Sveistrup's remarks on this policy point up Denmark's dilemma in attempting to hold down the prices of both imports and exports, raise the living standards of the Greenlanders, and at the same time balance its budget. He writes:

> "more than a century ago it was considered desirable that the population of Greenland should abandon the original earth and peat huts in favour of wooden houses.
>
> "The wooden houses sent up in 1836 were calculated to cost the Administration a purchase price of 266 rigsdaler per house, and with a smaller change in the following year 250 rigsdaler. The freight per house was calculated at half the price or 120 rigsdaler for the four commercial shipments, as the material could be stowed on deck. Irrespective of the fact that the 370 rigsdaler did not comprise any part of the ordinary costs of the Royal Greenland Trade, it was thought that a Greenland family could not pay such a price, and that the introduction of the houses could not be effected, if the prices were put higher than the value of 16 barrels of blubber, which was 3½ rigsdaler per barrel at the time when the above-mentioned calculatory considerations were taking place, the price of a house being then fixed at 56 rigsdaler. In a similar manner the price of a Greenland stove, for which the Royal Greenland Trade paid 45 rigsdaler, was fixed as low as 10½ rigsdaler.
>
> "In spite of these low prices the population of Greenland did not take the desired interest in the houses and the stoves, as it proved extremely difficult to procure the necessary fuel; wood had to be fetched from afar (as a rule within the deep fiords), and so it was particularly expensive in proportion to the level of income. In order to promote the desirable transition to the wooden houses it was, therefore, necessary to provide other fuel, and here the North Greenland coal mines became of value. The working of these, however, proved to be so expensive that there was no prospect of selling a suitable quantity, if the prices were fixed at the cost of production, and so they were put at a much lower level." (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 177, cf. id. pp. 188–9 and Bobé, 1929, p. 149).

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the government, i.e. the Royal Greenland Trade, did succeed in balancing its budget at this period, but only because Europe was offering high prices for Greenland's chief product, blubber. From 1829 to 1880, indeed, the Greenland trade, which carried on its shoulders all administrative expenses, and all the costs of schools, churches, and medical care, earned the tidy surplus of roughly 6 million kroner, which it paid into Denmark's treasury.[1] But about 1880 the market for seal- and whale-oil turned sour, and from then until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 government operations in Greenland ran almost continually into the red.

Fortunately, throughout the years we are here considering, i.e., the second quarter of the nineteenth century, oil was still in strong demand, and the government's trade enjoyed a period of comparative prosperity. It stimulated the moribund whaling industry, increased the harvest of seals, and promoted the development of shark and cod fisheries, although these two species of fish were less abundant then than they became later—judging from Rink's remarks in 1882 that down to his day cod had never been very plentiful in the southern fiords, and that only in certain years had Europeans succeeded in deriving any profit from them.[2] Godthåb regained some of its former population and

[1]Lindow, 1929, p. 34. This amount included royalties of more than 2 million kroner from the cryolite mine at Ivigtut, which opened in 1859. Lindow does not state whether the treasury earmarked the 6 million surplus for the benefit of the Greenland people, in accordance with the government's decision in 1840.

[2]Sveistrup, 1949, p. 99.

prosperity, and in 1839 the government stationed there a medical officer to supervise the southern coast of Greenland as far as Julianehåb, while the medical outpost established at Jakobshavn in 1793 continued to service north Greenland. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, too, the administration attempted to train a few native Greenlanders, principally mixed-bloods, in Denmark—the young men as teachers and artisans, the girls as nurses; but the well-intentioned project, very successful half a century later, failed at this period because hardly any natives could yet understand the Danish language, although all, or almost all, could read and write their own tongue. Accordingly, in 1846, Denmark founded two seminaries in Greenland, one at Godthåb and the other at Jakobshavn, to train an elite of native clergymen and teachers who, through their knowledge of both the Danish and the Eskimo tongues, might bridge the linguistic chasm separating the Greenlanders from Europeans (Bobé, 1949, pp. 149–52). Not one of these measures, however, permanently strengthened the economy of Greenland, or checked the steady disintegration of its inhabitants, though they helped the Royal Greenland Trade to claim a small profit on its operations, an average yearly surplus from 1829 to 1849 of 40,617 kroner (Bobé, 1929, p. 166).

Meanwhile the native population had slowly divided itself into two classes, hunters who followed the traditional Eskimo life and drew their sustenance from the sea, and employees of the Trade and the missions who copied the habits of their European masters and consumed a considerable quantity of imported food. These employees, who with their families comprised less than 5 per cent probably of the total population, lived the rough but economically secure lives of servants in far northern Europe. Their conservative kindred, on the other hand, were finding the struggle for existence each day more difficult; for over-hunting had destroyed or driven away the whales; overslaughter at their breeding grounds near Jan Mayen, and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, had gravely depleted the herds of migratory seals, harp and bladder-nose, which summered in the fiords of Greenland's southwest coast,[1] and a climatic change signalled its impending approach by rendering the waters of south Greenland less and less attractive to seals, but more favourable to the cod which in the dim past had discovered an ocean pathway north to Davis Strait. Greenland received her first harsh warning of this change in 1844, when her hunters scoured the coast in their kayaks, day after day, without finding enough seals to keep famine from their doors; and many people died of starvation at the onset of winter. Rink tells us that

> "From this period [i.e. 1844] the signs of the declining national prosperity grew more general and evident.
>
> "In 1853–4 a very severe winter set in, accompanied by the failure of the seal-fishery, and several individuals in isolated places died from cold and starvation. But this year of need was greatly surpassed by the disasters of the winter of 1856–7, when about 150 people died from cold and famine, and in the following summer an epidemic carried off about 100 more." (Rink, 1877, p. 159).

[1] ". . . the number of seals of passage caught within the period 1830–60 [at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River] amounted to as many as 500,000 annually, and it is not to be wondered at that the stock of seals in the region around Davis Strait could not hold its own against such intensive hunting, and that this is one of the causes of the decline of the hunting of seals of passage (Greenland seals), which was formerly the safest basis of the economic existence for the Eskimos in South and North Greenland." (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 15).

During these difficult years it availed the natives very little that the Trade distributed to them oatmeal, bread, and other European foods free of charge, and sold them numerous goods on credit. Its very method of administering relief only increased the need and demand for it.

> "The distribution of food and other necessaries in time of need was, moreover, entrusted to the storekeepers of the Royal Board of Trade, of whom the greater part appointed at the many small outposts were taken from European workmen or persons of the labouring classes engaged for Greenland at low wages. The mere authority a man derived from his European extraction was considered necessary as well as sufficient for the task of a storekeeper and overseer of the poor. Now, on the other hand, every native considering himself indigent in comparison with a European, this way of relieving the poor tended to make the whole population dependent on these storekeepers for the chief necessaries of life during a certain season every year." (Rink, 1877, pp. 159–60).

Even in seasons when their hunting prospered Greenland families were earning only a pittance, and that pittance they often squandered on luxuries rather than necessities, as paupers of all countries so commonly do. Fortunately, in Greenland these luxuries were mainly coffee and tobacco, not alcoholic beverages, which the government carefully kept out of reach.

The communal way of life that Greenland's hunters had inherited from their ancestors was now working against them. It compelled the ablest and most energetic men in the old multi-family dwellings to share with all their house-mates the products of their daily seal-hunt, their purchases at the trading stores, even their boats, their tools, and their weapons. The incompetent and the lazy sat idly in their homes, draining like parasites the stamina of their fellows. Some of the best seal-hunters lost courage and themselves relapsed into idleness, ending their days in want and misery; others deserted their house-mates and wandered off alone with their families; and still others abandoned seal-hunting altogether and haunted the habitations of the Europeans, looking for permanent or temporary jobs though well aware that very few of them could expect even occasional employment. By 1850 the majority of the once proud and self-sufficient natives had degenerated into a wretched proletariat, ill-nourished, ill-clothed, and housed in unsanitary stone-and-sod huts where the mortality was so high that their race seemed doomed to extinction.[1]

From 1855 to 1861, says the historian Bobé (1929, p. 156) the population of west Greenland fell from 9647 to 9533; and a census taken in south Greenland in 1858 revealed that during the preceding five years deaths had numbered 1413[2]

[1]Cf. ". . . the natives here [at Fiskenæs and Lichtenfels] are very poor, and the community has decreased nearly one-half in the last thirty years. The most obvious feature in their impoverishment is their want of boats for their travelling life in summer. . . . The natives of Lichtenfels only exceptionally have been farther than 20 miles from their home, and many, perhaps, never leave it." (Rink *in* 'Memoirs of Hans Hendrik', 1878, p. 3. Hendrik wrote his memoirs in the Greenland Eskimo tongue during the winter of 1876–7).

[2]Birket-Smith wrote in 1928, "It is striking that the death rate is constantly greater on the southern as compared with the northern part of the west coast, apart from the last ten years [1915–1925] where the influenza epidemics exceptionally raised the rate of mortality to 34.7 per mille in North Greenland at against 21.2 per mille in South Greenland. However, the lower rate of mortality within the last fifty years especially benefits South Greenland, and one of the principal causes is undoubtedly the abolition, in 1900, of the Moravian missions in the Godthaab and Julianehaab Districts, for the Moravian Brethren acted very much upon the principle that only one thing is needed, and packed their 'sheep' together in large congregations, where all possibilities of hunting soon became exhausted." (1928, p. 26).

against only 957 births, the population had decreased 8.2 per cent, the number of seal-hunters 10–11 per cent, and the owners of umiaks or family travelling-boats 21 per cent (Lindow, 1929, p. 58).

> "According to various contemporary reports the population was reduced to a very deplorable state as the result of all this. Tents and umiaqs decayed and the natives did not even have the necessary clothes and bedding. Summer journeys and tent life gradually ceased; no provisions were collected; the profits from sealing dwindled, being at last insufficient to provide the Greenlanders themselves with the necessary skins; even the number of winter dwellings decreased, and those still existing fell into decay, as failing blubber for heating purposes, the woodwork was used as fuel. The state of distress was greatest at the dwelling places of the Moravian Brethren, where the people lived in complete dependency and too great concentration, being crowded together in miserable, tumble-down earthen huts and mostly deriving a precarious living from fishing." (Lindow, 1929, pp. 58–9).

Even the earnings of the Royal Greenland Trade shrank until by 1850 its only profit came from the royalties on the cryolite mine at Ivigtut, which was leased to a private company in Denmark and operated not by Greenlanders, but by miners brought over each year from Europe.

In Denmark, meanwhile, the controversy concerning free trade versus a trade monopoly still simmered. Hardly had the nation liberalized its constitution in 1849 than it abolished the trade monopoly it had imposed on the Faroe Islands in the previous century. A year later, in 1851, it appointed a new commission to consider how it might abolish its trade monopoly in Greenland also. One of the members of this commission, Dr. Hinrik Rink, had visited north Greenland in 1848 to examine the graphite beds at Upernavik and Umanak, and had then lingered in the region for two more years to investigate the mineral and other resources of its coastline and to study its inland ice. Recalled to Denmark to share the labours of the new commission he quickly became the principal advocate, not of the abolition of the trade monopoly, but of its retention until such time as the Greenlanders became more educated, and more capable of managing their own affairs.

Rink built his case on his own personal experiences and observations, which he later set forth in a book called 'Om Monopolhandelen paa Grønland', published in 1852. He there described the known resources of Greenland, stressing how limited and uncertain they were for the maintenance of a prosperous population or the support of a vigorous trade. Agriculture was not possible, for even the hardiest potatoes grew no larger than pebbles and seldom or never ripened. Grass could be found in many places, and the old Norse settlers had raised cattle and sheep in some of the southern fiords, particularly around Julianehåb; but though they had employed cheap serf labour, very seldom had they obtained more meat and milk than sufficed for their own households. The half-dozen Danes who now, in 1850, were raising sheep on the farms of the old Norsemen were likewise avoiding high labour costs by employing Greenlanders who lived mainly on seals—Greenland men to tend their flocks and Greenland women to transport their masters by umiak whenever they needed to travel along the coast. Yet they too were finding animal husbandry as precarious as had the Moravian missionaries some seventy-five years before them,

because any unfavourable summer sharply reduced the amount of winter fodder their employees could collect and threatened their flocks with starvation.[1]

It was clear, Rink argued, that the Greenlanders could rely for their daily sustenance neither on agriculture nor on domesticated animals, but only on the wildlife around them, the seals and fish in the water and the hares and caribou on land. In pre-European times they had been able to keep their entire catch for their own consumption, but now white traders demanded a share of their meat and a very large portion of their blubber and skins in payment for European goods that had become indispensable, or at least highly desired; and this "sharing" of a production that could not fail to be limited had helped to impoverish them and reduce them to their present indigence and misery. They could not increase their production, could not expand, for example, their fisheries, by working the cod banks outside the fiords, because they lacked both the training and the equipment of Europe's commercial fishermen. Of resources other than animals and fish they had none. Their land even lacked exploitable minerals, apart from the low-grade coal in the Disko district, and the small cryolite deposit at Ivigtut which the Royal Greenland Trade had taken in hand and was operating with white workers.[2] With no other exploitable resources there could be no industries, and consequently no wage-employment for the Greenlanders except as servants to the white colonists,[3] all of whom were themselves employees of the Danish government.

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[1]"In the year 1759, one of the missionaries brought over three sheep from Denmark to New Herrnhut. These multiplied so much, by producing two or three lambs at a birth, that the brethren, after yearly killing several, and sending a few to Lichtenfels as breeders, have been able to preserve ten over winter. . . . Their small flock of sheep has often afforded the brethren an agreeable substitute for salt beef . . .

"The plain surrounding New Herrnhut would be abundant pasturage for a flock of two or three hundred, during the four summer months; but what precludes the possibility of keeping more than ten through the year, is the difficulty of procuring provender for the winter, which must be collected with great trouble from the ruins of Greenland houses, and brought from a great distance by water.

"Oxen were formerly kept at Godthaab, but it was found too expensive and troublesome to provide them with food. Goats or swine might be easily maintained there, were not these animals so mischievous, as to commit depredations upon the provisions and tent-skins of the Greenlanders." (Crantz, 1820, vol. 1, pp. 70–1).

[2]The importance of cryolite "was not ascertained till the year 1856, when a chemical process was discovered, by means of which it may be converted into soda, and an alumina hitherto unequalled in regard to purity and fitness for the art of dyeing. . . . In 1857 a licence was given to a private company for working cryolite. . . . The number of labourers employed in working it generally amount to a hundred in summer, and thirty in winter, besides the officers, viz. the superintendent and his assistant, the storekeeper, the engineer, the physician, the controller, and their families." (Rink, 1877, pp. 79, 80). Not until much later did cryolite come to be used as a flux in the manufacture of aluminum.

[3]"We have mentioned that the Moravians at each of their stations used to have a regular staff of ten to twelve servants, besides occasional helpers. The other settlers in Greenland cannot generally boast of an attendance so ample, but, indeed, they would be badly off without the assistance of native domestics. At first, of course, only European labourers and servants could be had. As regards the Royal Trade, the important business of a cook, with the meaner work belonging to it, was the first situation entrusted to the natives. The Eskimo cooks have now everywhere supplanted their Danish colleagues, of whom only a few specimens still existed in the furthest north some years ago: this speaks sufficiently for the superiority of the former. . . .

"It must be granted that the service to be had from the natives in their present state is only of inferior quality as regards the management of stores and commanding or directing other people." (Rink, 1877, pp. 299–300). Rink wrote these lines about 1874.

Europeans could neither increase the scanty resources, nor change the geographical conditions that multiplied the costs of the island's administration and trade, i.e., the severe climate, long coastline, widely scattered population and hazardous communications during both summer and winter. Nature is unpredictable, too, and only in favourable seasons could trade ever hope to cover its expenses, whether it was conducted by the government or by private enterprise. This again Europeans could not change, unless they chanced to discover resources not previously known. By quarantining the island and monopolizing the trade the government could control the internal prices of all goods, stabilize living costs, and protect the population from many unnecessary hardships; but it was powerless to check the ceaseless fluctuations in Greenland's production and trade, or to control the prices of its products in world markets.

Abolition of the government monopoly, Rink concluded, and the throwing open of the trade to all and sundry, would harm the Greenlanders rather than help them, because free traders would encourage them to sell in summer the blubber, skins, and other goods they needed to tide them over the winter months; then, in unfavourable seasons, these same traders would cut their losses and fade away, leaving their customers stranded. No conscientious government would dare to be so irresponsible, least of all the government of Denmark, which since the first days of colonization had never ceased to declare its concern for the welfare of the Greenland people.

So argued Rink, and the government, yielding to his arguments, made no changes, although it was deeply disturbed by the wretched condition and numerical decline of the Greenlanders, and not entirely satisfied with the management and operations of the Royal Greenland Trade. In 1863 it appointed still another commission to look into Greenland's administration; but when that body too failed to produce any acceptable solution it quietly shelved for an indefinite period any further thought of separating the island's trade from its administration, or of modifying and perhaps abolishing the trade monopoly itself. Nevertheless, under pressure from Rink, whom it had sent back to Greenland with the rank of inspector, and from a naval officer named Bluhme, who spent the winter of 1863–4 on Greenland's west coast and published a very moving description of the depressed conditions of its inhabitants (Bluhme, 1865), it sanctioned two important innovations. One was a housing policy which aimed to provide the Greenlanders with homes more comfortable and more sanitary than the stone-and-sod houses still universal at that period; and the second was a measure to raise their status and their morale by giving them an authoritative voice in the local administration of their districts, thereby—in Rink's judgement at least—setting them on the path to eventual self-government. Bluhme strongly supported this policy. Plan to give Greenland back to the Greenlanders, he advocated, and begin without delay to educate and train them to carry out the various services which the administration of the island requires.

The housing program, which closely followed the lines of the 1836 program (see p. 42), appears to have been moderately successful, coinciding as it did with the growing tendency of the Greenlanders to abandon their old multi-family dwellings in favour of individual homes where they could enjoy undisturbed the new possessions coming to them from Europe. The Royal Greenland Trade shipped from Denmark prefabricated wooden houses, to be sold at cost price on the instalment plan; and because the Greenlanders who

most needed them lacked the money or the credit to purchase them, it instructed its traders to make the funds available on loan, or in special cases as straight gifts. To heat the new houses, and for cooking, the trading company also supplied cheap metal stoves adapted to use the lignite coal mined in the Disko district during the slack months of winter; for that fuel could take the place of precious blubber which, burned in the old saucer-shaped lamps, gave much less heat than coal, and emitted also more smoke.

The program brought about the construction of many new homes that were sorely needed, but it produced one very unhappy result. It increased the demoralization of the Greenlanders by making them more dependent than ever on the all-controlling, all-dispensing Europeans, to whom they were now turning for everything instead of striving to provide most of their needs themselves. Furthermore, it failed to touch the main cause of the Greenlanders' decline, which was not the wretched, unsanitary houses—although these contributed—but the complete breakdown of the family and community organization which had regulated their lives from remotest antiquity.[1]

The Danish authorities realized this. They realized, too, that it is infinitely easier to set up a housing program and transform the outward appearance of a community than to shore up a people's drooping morale and rebuild a society that lies shattered and in ruins. Nature has ordained that the regeneration of living things must proceed from within, not from without; that a society, like an individual human being, must be the architect and builder of its own redemption. Conscious of this the government, on the advice of Rink and his collaborator, the Moravian missionary and Eskimo scholar Samuel Kleinschmidt, inaugurated a genuine rehabilitation program by inviting the most reliable Greenlanders, the most enterprising seal-hunters, to share responsibility with the Danish traders and inspectors for all relief measures, and to act as judges in all disputes between the Greenlanders themselves, and between Greenlanders and Danes, seeing that by the *Instructions* of 1782 Denmark's own legal code had been judged inapplicable to the native population.

The invitation took the form of seats on the "municipal councils", or "Boards of Guardians", as they were called, which Rink, as the government's inspector, created in 1857 in South Greenland—one in each of its five districts—and introduced six years later into North Greenland also. Each board consisted of a permanent president (the local clergyman), two or three appointees from officers of the Royal Greenland Trade, and native representatives elected by the Greenlanders themselves, one for approximately every 120 persons in the district's population (see Table 12). In the beginning no Greenlander could stand for election who was not a skilful seal-hunter, i.e. a producing member of the community, or a respected ex-seal-hunter who had been forced to retire through some infirmity.

The board met twice yearly, and conducted all its business in the Eskimo language, not in Danish. In addition to providing a sounding-board for native opinion, and serving as a postal box for the forwarding of legislative proposals to the government in Copenhagen, it performed three definite functions:

1. It acted as a law-court for the investigation of civil and criminal offences. For trifling offences it could impose fines, or in some cases corporal punishment; but serious crimes, after a preliminary hearing, it referred to the regional inspector.

[1]Cf. Lindow, 1929, p. 59.

2. It regulated disputes concerning inheritances, which were becoming not infrequent now that the old communal life was disappearing and private ownership of property increasing, especially in the mixed population.
3. It administered all public relief, a task previously performed by the traders of the Royal Greenland Trade (see p. 31).

To finance these activities the Danish government levied a tax of 25 per cent (which was reduced to 20 per cent in 1868, when the price of blubber was raised 43 per cent) on all native products that the Royal Greenland Trade purchased within the district. The company paid this percentage into what was called the "Greenlanders' Fund", where it was divided into two parts, one to be administered by the district Board of Guardians, the other by the Regional Inspector. The board expended nearly all its shares on relieving distress, separating the recipients of its relief, which consisted mainly of food, clothes, tools, and fuel, into two groups, those whose distress had resulted from their own negligence and idleness, and those who were the innocent victims of misfortune. Then, in the spring of each year, it audited its accounts for the preceding twelve months and distributed any surplus funds among the district's seal-hunters, whose activities, of course, were the real source of its finances.[1]

This bold scheme for a local administration opened the door of opportunity to the most active and enterprising of the Greenlanders, those who seemed most capable of becoming the leaders in their communities. Election to the Boards of Guardians raised them above the mass of their fellows, conferred on them a definite status among both their countrymen and the Danes, and placed the reins of considerable authority within their reach if they possessed the will to grasp them. Yet it did not create a distinct caste, did not separate the guardians from their countrymen or release them from the ancient obligations, binding on all seal-hunters from an era beyond memory, to share the products of their hunting and fishing with every member of their community. It merely changed that obligation a little by requiring them to share, through the 25 per cent tax, not the actual seal-meat, blubber, and skins they had contributed in earlier years, but the money or credit those products brought at the trading stores; and this was a change that worked to everyone's advantage, because both the distribution of relief to the needy, and the division of the year's surplus among the seal-hunters, stimulated the use of money and the practice of making simple mathematical calculations, both of which were vital steps in training the Greenlanders for the world of commerce which was now engulfing them. Nor did the Boards of Guardians abolish the hunters' traditional obligation to support the aged, the infirm, and the destitute, although they may have weakened that obligation in certain localities. What they did do was to emphasize the need for discrimination and restraint; for while they shielded every section of the population from grave distress as long as hunting and trade continued to prosper, they also threw the searchlight of publicity on idleness and improvidence, and publicity is a very powerful agent in a society that is being catapulted out of its primitive communalism into a milieu of free enterprise and competitive individualism.

"But the most important feature of the experiment was that the guardians proved themselves able to administer the affairs of the relief fund in such a manner that, without incurring too great expenses, they warded off actual starvation and prompted the better part of the

[1]Cf. p. 89.

population to independence and diligence. However, in North Greenland the boards of guardians had greater difficulties to surmount than in South Greenland, and a significant difference arose between the boards of guardians of the two provinces in that all borrowing was completely stopped in South Greenland, and the contributions to the relief of the poor were made an actual gift, while this proceeding was considered impracticable in North Greenland where, for a number of years, a considerable practice of borrowing was kept up in addition to the support given by the board of guardians." (Lindow, 1929, p. 61).

History would seem to establish that during the half century of their existence—they were abolished in 1911—the Boards of Guardians blue-printed the outlines of some of the most characteristic features in the administration of modern Greenland; also that in the tracing of these outlines the Boards' juridical functions worked hand in glove with their activities in the field of welfare. Rink believed that the strongest anchor of every state was its laws, and that in primitive societies established customs and the rulings of elders sitting in council were just as valid as the judgements of regularly constituted law-courts. Accordingly, he directed his Boards of Guardians to record in writing the disputes submitted to them for arbitration and the offences brought before them for judgement; and in every case to set forth their decision.[1] Later in his career, he caused some of these records, together with related material concerning contemporary life in Greenland, to be collected, sifted, and in condensed form published as a primer of Greenlandic customs and Greenlandic civil and criminal law (Ostermann, 1929a, p. 174). Inevitably many of the decisions the boards arrived at in civil cases lost touch with reality as old customs died out and the Greenlanders' manner of life approximated that of their Danish neighbours; but most of their judgements in criminal cases, most of the sentences they pronounced, became recognized precedents until after the end of the Second World War, when jurists incorporated the majority of them in a special Criminal Code for Greenland which, enacted by Denmark's parliament in 1951, governs the law-courts of Greenland today (cf. pp. 132–3).

Through its imaginative Boards of Guardians, then, Denmark tried to give the Greenlanders a genuine place in the administration of their country, but so great was their demoralization that a quarter of a century elapsed before any considerable number mustered the courage to step into the limelight and play important roles. Just as the seed must adapt itself to the environment in which it has been planted before it can germinate and send out roots, so for many years most of the Greenlanders on the Boards of Guardians were content to rehearse the parts of their Danish colleagues and passively accept the latters' opinions and judgements.

The truth was that they sorely needed leadership from a cadre of their own people, and there had been no institution on hand which could train such a cadre until the seminaries at Godthåb and Jakobshavn opened their doors in 1846. By that date every native on Greenland's west coast had been baptized by a Danish or Moravian missionary, or by a missionary-trained catechist, and had learned to read and write his own language, to recite the tenets of the missionaries' faith, and to work out simple arithmetical problems. The new seminaries provided six-year courses in geography, history, natural history, and the Danish language, subjects well calculated to expand the horizons of youths

[1]Between 1882 and 1911 the Boards of Guardians handled 189 cases (Lindow, 1929, p. 64).

who had never seen a city of brick and stone, a field of grain, a vehicle drawn by horses or machinery driven by steam;[1] but the funds available to the missionaries were so restricted, teachers who could speak both Eskimo and Danish so scarce, that neither institution could accept more than eight pupils.

Happily, there appeared on the scene at this time the linguistic genius Samuel Kleinschmidt, a Moravian missionary's son who was born in Greenland in 1814, learned the Eskimo and Danish languages in childhood, studied in Europe for several years, and finally returned to Greenland with the avowed purpose of devoting his life to missionary and educational work, and to a study of the Eskimo tongue. The old feud between the Moravians and the Lutherans had long since died down, even though as late as 1860 one-fifth of the population on Greenland's west coast—1,945 persons out of 9,648—were listed as members of the Moravian congregation; and it was without hesitation, therefore, that the Danish administration accepted Kleinschmidt as a teacher in the Lutheran seminary at Godthåb. His appointment brought a bountiful harvest. Before he died in 1886 he had written several text-books for the two seminaries, trained an appreciable number of native catechists, translated the Old Testament into Eskimo, compiled an excellent Eskimo-Danish dictionary which has continued in use to the present day,[2] and in the administrative field consistently supported Rink's efforts to expand the work of the Boards of Guardians and revive the Greenlanders' morale.

Greenland's educational system slowly but steadily improved after the establishment of the two seminaries: even the closing of the Jakobshavn seminary in 1875 failed to check its growth. It began to acquire, also, a national character, especially after Rink promoted the setting up of a small printing press in Godthåb and founded in 1861 a monthly newspaper in Eskimo called *Atuagagdliutit*, "Reading", to disseminate important information and to publish articles of interest concerning Greenland, particularly articles contributed by Greenlanders themselves. Now more than one hundred years old, and issued fortnightly instead of monthly, *Atuagagdliutit* has become the Greenland equivalent of the *London Times*, being read from one end of the country to the other.[3]

The rising level of education brought in its train an improvement in the mechanics of trade. Around the middle of the nineteenth century the administration, realizing that the country was outgrowing the primitive barter system

[1]This curriculum compared not unfavourably with those of rural districts in Europe and America during the first half of the nineteenth century.

[2]Hans Egede had compiled an Eskimo dictionary, using the unmodified letters of the Roman alphabet to indicate approximately the same sounds as they represent in Danish. His son Poul continued his work, and in 1750 published an enlarged version of the dictionary, to which he added a grammar ten years later. So inaccurate, however, were both these works that half a century later Otto Fabricius, who had been Lutheran missionary at Frederikshåb from 1768 to 1773, revised them thoroughly and issued second editions, of the dictionary in 1801 and of the grammar in 1804. Unfortunately, he still employed the same imperfect orthography, as did also another missionary, K. Kjer, who in 1831 translated into Eskimo 22 Danish drinking songs which Greenlanders still sing on festive occasions. Then Kleinschmidt revolutionized the orthography by introducing two simple but exceedingly important refinements: he used a capitalized *K* to indicate an uvular guttural very common in the Eskimo language, but unknown to Scandinavian tongues; and he added two accents over vowels, a circumflex to denote a lengthening of the vowel itself and an acute to mark a doubling of the succeeding consonant. All Eskimo books and newspapers current in Greenland since his day have been printed in his orthography.

[3]Cf. Schultz-Lorentzen, 1928, pp. 223–6; Nielsen, 1961, p. 75.

ATUAGAGDLIUTIT.

NALINGINARNIK TUSARUMINASASSUNIK UNIVKAT.

No 1. Januar 1. 1861.

Umiarssuarnik, aussame 1860me, Nûngmîtunik.

(nugterissok R. Berthelsen.)

Aussak kingugdlek kângiútok kujatâ tamákerdlune sikorssuakatdlarmat, umiarssuit tatdlimat Arsungmut ujarkiat Nûngmut nunaligput, kujatânut nunalivfigssaerugkamik. Umiarssualivingmîlerianguatdlartut, umiarssuit tâuko, niggînalerdlune sikorssuit âma pulatitdlugit Nûp ikera milípât. Umiarssuarnik avdlanik ilimasugtuerútok únúkut silagigsorssûgâ âma umiarssuârtulekaut, erssérputdlo umiarssuit angíngitsut (Sukornortimik taissagarput) katdliartuarsínardlutik, sikutdle amerdlavatdlârmata kekertarssûp avatânut kisarput. Ornigdlugit ajornaratdlarput, kâinatdlûnît avkutigssakángitdlat, naluvaitdlo inuisa sûssusiat. Akago kaungmat aitsât kâinat ornigpait, uteramigdlo nagsarput agdlagkanik umiarssuit nâlagânit.— Okautigait nâlagarpagssuagdlit Ameríkarmiussutdlo, nunamik takujartuínardlutik tamaunga pissut. Umiarssuit kanigdliartoraluardlutik umiarssualivik angunek ajulerpât sikorssuarnit. Taimailissut âma umiarssuârtulerput, pujorssuardlo imáinarme takutípok, kanitdlingmatdlo takuait umiarssuit mardluk, imáitumik: angûtiligssuak umiarssuarmik avdlamik kaligtok. Ama táukua Ameríkarmiut kalusiúpait, tássalo taimailivdlune Nûp umiarssualivia umiarssuakalerpok arfinek pingasunik. Niggînardlune sikorssuit avalagtínek ajulermagit, umiarssuit táukua nunalísimápat uvdlorpagssuit, Nûvdlo inue aitsât taima inungnik amerdlatigissunik takúput nunamingne. Taimaingmat Aron Kangermio kínuvigârput, takungmagit ássilerkuvdlugit, takordlôrnermik, ássilissâlo táuna ujarkamut nakiterparput.

Ameríkarmiut akilinermêrkârsimavdlutik tamaunga ikârsimáput Manîtsuvdlo erkânut kekertâlungnut nunalitdlutik; nunale ilisarínagilât inungnigdlo takussinek ajordlutik. Tingmíssanik mangningnigdlo ûmassúnguanigdlo tamalainik katerssíput; Nûvdle erkânut pagdligúkamik aitsât nuánâlerput inugsissaleramik. Sákunik kalâtdlit piniar-

Fig. 3. First page of the first number of *Atuagagdliutit*.

of earlier years, began to issue "bills of credit" or paper money, redeemable only at its Greenland trading stations. About the same time, too, it established a savings bank in Godthåb which offered 4 per cent interest on depositors' money. I do not know who introduced these reforms, but it may well have been Rink, since they must have greatly aided his Boards of Guardians in their distribution of relief and re-partitioning of the surpluses. The paper money seems to have continued in use until 1926, when the Danish government introduced Greenland's present monetary system, which is identical with Denmark's, but possesses its own bank-notes of 100, 50, 10, and 5 kroner denominations, and its own metal coins for 5 kroner, 1 krone, 50 øre, and 25 øre, all current in Greenland only, but readily exchangeable at par for Danish money at any of Denmark's banks.[1]

[1]Cf. Christiansen, 1962, pp. 441–56.

CHAPTER 3

Bureaucracy's brief triumph: 1870–1905

Ill-health banished Rink from Greenland in 1868, and he saw his adopted country again only on two or three fleeting visits. His heart remained there, however, for as early as 1852, says Ostermann (1929a, pp. 184–5):

> "the thought which became the aim of his life had crystallized—*viz.* to impart culture and civilization to the Greenlanders, so that they might keep and develop their powers of resistance, and gradually be sufficiently matured both to attend to the direction of their own affairs and to extend their intercourse with foreigners, and this should be done by slow stages and under an effective control, as distinguished from other primitive peoples to whom civilization had come so suddenly that it led to their demoralization and decimation."

In 1871, therefore, when the government offered him the post of Director of the Royal Greenland Trade, Rink gladly accepted, hoping to bring about two changes which would check the stagnation and decay he had observed along the entire west coast. Unhappily, enemies in government circles prevented him from making much headway with his plans, and so discouraged him that in 1882 he abandoned forever all administrative work and retired to Norway, where he devoted the last years of his life to literary studies.

The first change he had attempted to make was to separate Greenland's trade from its administration, for since his participation in the commission of 1851, when he had opposed such a step (see p. 47), he had discovered how frequently the welfare of the Greenlanders was being sacrificed to commercial interests and financial profits, notwithstanding Denmark's firm condemnation of such action in the earlier years of the century. His Ministry, however, refused to re-open the question of separating the two branches of government activity or to modify in any way the existing arrangements. One concession, and one only, it granted: it sanctioned the creation of a "Commission for the Affairs of the Greenlanders", composed of six experts under the presidency of the Director of the Royal Greenland Trade, to notify it of all important happenings in Greenland (particularly such as related to the Boards of Guardians) and to advise it whenever changes or new instructions appeared necessary. Mantled with that function, and assured of official support for a reasonable period of years, an active commission could have become the mouthpiece of the Boards of Guardians, and through them of the whole population on Greenland's west coast. Rink, indeed, fervently strove for this development as long as he retained the presidency of the commission; but as soon as he retired from office the government replaced him with his most intransigent adversary, and the new president so consistently ignored his commission that in 1893 it voted its own dissolution.

Hardly more successful, to all outward appearances, was Rink's second project, designed to speed up the education and training of the Greenlanders

and to bring nearer the day when they would be capable of taking into their own hands, not only the skilled and unskilled jobs largely monopolized by Danes, but the full administration of their homeland. Experience had taught him that, far from being an inferior people, they were as talented as their rulers, and for many years he had pondered how Denmark could best deploy their talents to bring prosperity to their country and enhance the well-being of all its inhabitants, Greenlanders and Danes alike. Previous half-hearted efforts to train in Denmark a few selected individuals, most of them half-breeds,[1] had proved so ineffectual that in the mid-nineteenth century the government had embarked on the practice of apprenticing young Greenlanders to the Danish carpenters, coopers, and other artisans it was employing in Greenland; and the experiment had worked so well that by 1870 native Greenlanders were performing most of the semi-skilled tasks in the larger settlements, and managing trade stations in two or three minor outposts (Ostermann, 1929a, pp. 1, 177). It was Rink himself who had promoted this training program, and he still endorsed it; but, like today's leaders in the world's undeveloped countries, he found its horizon too limited. Greenland, he never doubted, could use all the semi-skilled workers that she could train; but she needed also, or would need in the not-distant future, numbers of skilled workers and highly-trained professionals to manage and direct her economic activities, guide the education of her youth, administer her hospitals, and plan and direct the countless other tasks of a complex and smoothly-functioning society. Since she herself lacked the means to train these professionals and skilled workers, Rink proposed to do what all our undeveloped nations are doing today, namely, to send large numbers of the young people abroad for training. And abroad in this case meant Denmark.[2]

He initiated the scheme without fanfare by arranging for two Greenlanders to be apprenticed to private individuals in Denmark; then, a few years later, he sent to the homeland four others to train at government expense for service in the Royal Greenland Trade. About the same time, too, he facilitated the education in Denmark of some students from the Godthåb seminary who aspired to complete their theological studies in Europe and return to Greenland as fully ordained clergymen. This gradual sprouting of his scheme brought him face to face with the problem of providing suitable accommodation for the trainees and close supervision of their activities during their stay in Denmark, and he conceived the idea of housing them near their training places in a special residence, where the society of their fellow countrymen and the sound of their native speech would banish the loneliness that commonly besets the inexperienced stranger in a foreign land. After brooding over his idea for a time and discussing it thoroughly with his commission of experts, he submitted to his Minister, in 1879, a plan for a "Home for Greenlanders", to be built on the outskirts of Copenhagen as a residence for Greenland youth of both sexes who were taking training courses in various parts of

[1]"In the year 1820 the half-breeds were calculated at 14 per cent., and in 1885 at 30 per cent. of the inhabitants, but these numbers are very vague, and in the latest years it has not been possible to ascertain the relative numbers of these two classes on account of their blending almost imperceptibly into one another." (Rink, 1877, pp. 163–4).

[2]Mr. Mads Lidegaard tells me that northern Europe's Volkshochschule (High School for adults) originated in Denmark at this period and that one of its founders was an intimate friend of Rink. He probably inspired some of Rink's ideas.

the city. The Ministry studied the plan closely, imposed certain limitations on the residence's functions and use, and approved it; and the "Home", a rather large building, opened its doors in 1880. Its regulations read:

> "1) that the young natives, during their stay there, should try to learn the Danish language and Danish customs so thoroughly as to command the respect necessary for their future position, both in relation to their countrymen and Europeans; they should not, in any way, be accustomed to luxury, but remain Greenlanders in their demands on life;
>
> "2) that the home should, at the same time, be an educational establishment where the young boarders were in every respect brought up according to strict rules, and taught to practise economy, and also, as far as their time permitted, to take part in the daily household work; and there should also be regular evening and morning prayers in the Greenlandic language;
>
> "3) that the direction of the home should be entrusted to the Commission for Greenland Affairs whose Copenhagen members, whenever opportunity offered, should take part in the daily supervision and, at least once a month, inspect the whole home; the result of this inspection and the opinions expressed and orders given to the manager by the director of the Royal Greenland Trading Company and the physician appointed should be entered into a register, and in this register the members of the commission were further entitled to enter their remarks or proposals relating to the establishment." (Ostermann, 1929a, pp. 179–80).

For a few months all went well. Rink was proud of his new institution, and dreamed that it would prove a solid corner-stone for the rebuilding of Greenland's economy and the regeneration of her people. He visited it as often as he was able, and his commission of experts did likewise. But his enemies in the Ministry did not long remain silent. They violently attacked him for exceeding his authority, and when the Minister supported them and sharply rebuked Rink by letter, the latter handed in his resignation. His successor immediately placed the Home (or "boarding-house", as he scornfully named it) under an incompetent supervisor, who allowed it to fall into disrepute. The number of trainees then fell off, no new training applications reached Copenhagen from Greenland, the Commission for Greenland Affairs which had been charged with the direction of the Home voted itself out of existence, and in 1896, with his Minister's approval, a new Director of the Royal Greenland Trade closed the doors of the institution for ever. Thus Rink's far-sighted program for training Greenland colonials in the country of their rulers collapsed. The seed had fallen on stony ground, and the colony had to wait for a later generation of officials to resuscitate the scheme and plant a second crop.

Yet not all of Rink's seed withered. Although his planting yielded only thirty trained apprentices, those thirty, together with their supporters in Greenland, helped to leaven their countrymen and strengthen a trend to which Denmark herself added force, though not deliberately. Experience was convincing many officials and traders that native Greenlanders who could become artisans, teachers, and even ordained clergymen could be efficient clerks and outpost managers, cheaper and more easily recruited than casual sailors and workers from Denmark. Rink's successor himself unwittingly focused attention on Greenland's almost untapped pool of potential labour when he persuaded his Minister to issue an edict forbidding Danish traders of junior rank who had married Greenlandic women from enjoying their pensions in Denmark, or even retiring to that country with their families, unless they could

prove beforehand that they could pay their boat-passages and support themselves without aid. He expected the edict to produce just a few minor economies in the finances of the Royal Greenland Trade; but it discouraged so many Danes from enlisting in the Greenland service that the Trade had to recruit more employees within the colony itself, thereby increasing the number of jobs available to the Greenlanders just at a time when the economy of the island was breaking down and the old ways of life becoming no longer possible. Moreover, the edict placed a premium on the better-educated natives, whether of pure or mixed blood, and helped to weaken the racial prejudices which had bedevilled the administration since the days of Hans Egede. So its unintended results proved to be more beneficial, and more lasting, than the small-change financial objective which had inspired its proclamation.

The decline in Greenland's economy during Rink's last years of office over-shadowed his personal troubles with his Ministry. For more than two hundred years Europe had derived its chief illuminant from the oil of sea mammals, at the outset from whale-oil, but from the end of the eighteenth century, when over-hunting had seriously diminished the whale population in the North Atlantic, from the oil yielded by seal-blubber. Greenland's supply of seals appeared inexhaustible, and their oil, refined in Copenhagen, so excellent that it commanded higher prices than oil from Iceland and other regions. Consequently, throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century the Trade exported every pound of seal-oil it could entice from the Greenlanders, without heeding too greatly whether its customers retained sufficient fuel for their own needs during the months of winter. The table below shows how steadily exports increased from one decade to the next during the two middle quarters of the century.

Table 2. Exports of seal-oil, 1828–77. (From Ostermann, 1929a, p. 168).

Years	*Seal-oil (barrels)*
1828–37	5070
1838–47	7194
1848–57	8055
1858–67	9155
1868–77	10089

It was the revenue from seal-oil and the royalties from the cryolite mine which kept the finances of the Trade from sinking irretrievably into the red. About 1875, however, there appeared on the market large quantities of a superior illuminant, oil from the spermaceti family of whales. The demand for seal-oil instantly declined, and the prices for it dropped relentlessly until by 1880 they amounted to only 70 per cent of the prices that had reigned five years earlier. In vain Rink sought to cushion the slump by fixing a minimum sale price and withholding a proportion of his stocks from the market. This artifice staved off a crisis for two or three years, but no longer, because Greenland's exports to Copenhagen, running at about 10,000 barrels annually, loaded the Trade with a continuously growing stock for which it lacked a profitable outlet. Merchants were asking each other whether seal-oil prices ever would regain their earlier level. Certainly the immediate outlook was grim.

At this juncture the government demanded from Rink and his commission of experts a detailed analysis of the situation. Their report interests us today

mainly on account of the light it sheds on their policies, for Rink disappeared from the scene before he could implement the positive measures it recommended, and his successor in Copenhagen disregarded them. Knowing Rink's previous record, we are not surprised that the report opposed any attempt to balance the Trade's finances by introducing economies detrimental to the welfare of the Greenland people. It emphasized that by giving the Greenlanders access to a large variety of European goods, particularly "luxury" foods such as bread, sugar, and coffee for which they had quickly acquired strong tastes,[1] Denmark had undermined their old self-sufficiency and created new wants for which they could pay only by surrendering many of the products of their hunting; that there were limits to the number of seals they could capture and the amount of oil they could sell; and that the large increase in their exports of oil during the nineteenth century did not indicate that they were capturing more seals than formerly, but only that they were selling more oil than they could really spare, and were using the proceeds of its sale (and also the relief funds distributed by the Boards of Guardians) to purchase increasing quantities of European goods. It followed, therefore, that the Royal Greenland Trade should curtail its expenses, not by reducing the already low prices it paid the Greenlanders for their oil and other products, but by increasing the prices it charged them for European "luxuries", and this would necessitate a revision of the long out-dated principles the company had been using to compile the price-schedule of its traders. The Trade might also economize by closing some of its branch trading posts, by replacing many of its Danish employees with Greenlanders, and by encouraging more young men, especially the Europeanized ones brought up in the larger settlements, to return to the hunting life of their forefathers. The Greenlanders were a highly intelligent people, the commission asserted, and they would willingly re-adjust themselves to the economic situation if the government laid the facts before them simply and clearly (cf. Ostermann, 1929a, pp. 167–72).

As happens to so many government reports, this one was pigeon-holed, and Rink's successor inherited a deficit trade in which the prices of seal-oil were constantly falling. A barrel of Greenland oil, which before 1880 had brought from 70 to 80 crowns, now sold for as little as 30, thereby reducing the income of the Royal Greenland Trade by nearly half a million crowns. Its new Director, who lacked any intimate knowledge of Greenland, could see no remedy for the situation except retrenchment. "Save the cheese-parings and the candle-ends", was the watchword of his day—or rather night, for his regime imposed a dark period of stagnation. Afraid of experiments, he undertook no improvements and sanctioned no changes that would cost money, but allowed the buildings and the vessels of his company to decay and the economy to slow down almost to a standstill. From about 1880 onward the shoals of cod which had visited the southwest coast of Greenland at uncertain intervals during the preceding half-century arrived with greater regularity, and some Danish officials in the region started a small fishing industry; but their

[1]During the years 1903–12, when precise calculations gave the average family in North Greenland a cash income of only 238.10 kroner, the inhabitants of some settlements were spending 50 per cent. of this amount on coffee and 10 per cent. on tobacco. We lack comparable calculations from South Greenland, but Lindow quotes a rough estimate which claims that the population on that part of the coast was spending as much as 76–80 per cent. of its income on the three "luxuries" coffee, sugar, and tobacco (Lindow, 1929, p. 32).

superiors in Copenhagen frowned on their initiative and gave them no encouragement. Even after the enterprise became so prosperous that the Royal Greenland Trade ventured to take over its management, senior officers were not allowed, at the outset at least, to develop the industry further, but instructed to prevent it from interfering with the traditional occupation of Greenlanders, sealing.

While Greenland's administration thus slumbered, however, men who were wide awake were improving her sea communications with Europe, exploring her inland ice and her many hundred miles of uncharted coasts, and rekindling in Denmark itself some of the missionary fervour for the ice-bound arctic island and its inhabitants that Hans Egede had aroused nearly two centuries earlier. Throughout most of the nineteenth century it had been, like Darkest Africa, a land of mystery. Only its western coastline had been charted and colonized, and even there very little was known about the region north of Upernavik except that in 1818 the English navigator John Ross had discovered, in Prince Regent Bay, a small and as yet uncivilized group of natives—the Polar Eskimos—who lived completely isolated from all other human beings, even their fellow Greenlanders. Numerous polar explorers visited them after Ross' day and Admiral Peary leaned heavily on their support when he was exploring the northern coast of Greenland, and, later, during his famous dash to the north pole; but it was not until the early years of the twentieth century that Denmark turned her eyes in their direction, claimed jurisdiction over the region as a part of Greenland, and undertook to educate and train its inhabitants to the level of their countrymen farther south.

The man who perhaps more than any other pushed Denmark into this remote corner of Greenland was L. Mylius-Erichsen, a writer and explorer who in 1902 led a party of scientists—the Danish Literary Expedition, it was called—across the ice of Melville Bugt to Kap York and spent a winter among the Polar Eskimos. Returning to Denmark in 1904 he vigorously assailed his country's administration of Greenland, and, among other charges, accused it of neglecting its obligations in the northwest corner of the island. The government, stung by his criticisms, sent a vessel of the Royal Greenland Trade to investigate conditions at Kap York, and five years later, in 1910, permitted Greenland's native-born explorer and ethnographer, Knud Rasmussen (who had accompanied Mylius-Erichsen on his sled journey across Melville Bugt), to open a private trading station in North Star Bay so that the Polar Eskimos might enjoy the same facilities for selling their furs and buying European goods as their fellow Greenlanders in the south. It carefully refrained from asserting any jurisdiction over the region, however, or from trying to enforce there the quarantine it had imposed on the rest of Greenland, but quietly closed its eyes while Rasmussen operated the station, which he named Thule, as a half-commercial, half-cultural enterprise, and also used it as a base for some of his seven Thule Expeditions, one of which, the celebrated Fifth Thule Expedition, carried him from Hudson Bay right across arctic America to the mouth of the Yukon River, and over Bering Strait to the shore of Soviet Siberia. It was not until the First World War that Denmark ventured to claim sovereignty over the whole of Greenland and to extend the quarantine to its far northern coast

(see p. 81); and not until after Rasmussen's death in 1933 did it enforce the trade monopoly and instruct the Royal Greenland Trade to operate the Thule trading post. In 1946, the United States built a small runway beside the post, and in 1951 expanded the runway into a mighty airbase which today plays a role in world affairs that Rasmussen and his generation never dreamed of. As for the Polar Eskimos who once brought their fox- and bear-skins to the old trading post, with Denmark's aid they moved to a new Thule some seventy miles farther north.

The name Thule seems hardly appropriate for any settlement in this region, whether trading post or airbase. It comes to us from the classical writers, whose stories of an *Ultima Thule* may reflect a faint tradition of the Orkneys, or a mythical island born of some mirage a voyager once saw in the stormy Norwegian Sea. Whatever the word's origin, to the Romans it signified a mysterious yet probably inhabited land at the world's extreme limit. But the land which the Polar Eskimos occupied in northwest Greenland was in no respect a world's end. Rather it was a bridgehead which their Baffin Island ancestors had seized about three centuries before and, unable to advance from it, refused to abandon. As a modern airbase, too, it is certainly not a terminus, but a staging-place between two hemispheres. It was not the northwest corner of Greenland, then, which merited the name Thule, but her southeast coast, guarded at its back by the ice cap, and shielded in front by the rarely penetrable stream of ice floes, the *storis,* which pours out of the Greenland Sea and slowly drifts down the east coast of the island until it reaches Kap Farvel; for this region successfully defied every attempt of both Europeans and West Greenlanders to invade its solitude until its own inhabitants disclosed the tortuous channel through Prins Christian Sund which gave access to their settlements.

Before their contact with Europeans the Eskimos on Greenland's two coasts followed the same general pattern of life, and understood each other's speech, though with considerable difficulty. What separated them were not the geographical barriers only, but certain anomalies in the culture and dialect of the East Greenlanders. Dr. Erik Holtved, who has closely studied these anomalies, speculates that the eastern natives may have inherited a little of the blood, the speech and the outlook of an ancient branch of the Eskimo race—the pre-Dorset or Proto-Dorset people—who wandered far and wide over America's Eastern Arctic during the second millennium before Christ and left still discernible traces of their camp sites and dwellings in several localities, among them Independence Fjord near the northeast tip of Greenland. His theory may well prove correct; for the numerous ruins of ancient habitations scattered along Greenland's east coast suggest that in some earlier era that side of the island supported a larger population than was present there in 1828, when the Danish explorer V. A. Graah, retracing a route blazed seventy-five years earlier by his countryman P. O. Walloe, wormed his way into the region in skin boats rowed by Eskimo women from the west coast.

Graah visited only the southern habitations of the East Greenlanders. From them he learned that the seals and the capelin which provided most of their food were mysteriously diminishing. A quarter of a century later some of the natives he had met migrated past Kap Farvel to the west coast, bearing with them grim tales of frequent famines and forced cannibalism. The Eskimo families north of them, they reported, reduced to a mere fraction of their

former number, were packing close to one another after the manner of musk-oxen attacked by wolves, and fighting desperately to ward off extinction.

From this time forward a steady stream of rumours that emanated from fugitives rounding Kap Farvel filtered up the west coast to Julianehåb and Godthåb, and from there to Denmark, confirming that somewhere along the east coast beyond the most northern point reached by Graah there dwelt a small tribe of Eskimos who had never brushed against Europeans, never acquired iron and other products of civilization, but employed tools and weapons fitted with blades of stone. In 1884 Captain Gustav Holm led a small expedition to search for them. He discovered that the lower part of the east coast, the district which Graah had explored and mapped fifty-six years earlier, had lost during the interval 80 per cent of its inhabitants; from 600 in 1828 they were reduced to 135. Passing their abandoned houses he pressed northward, and at last arrived at the land of the stone-age Eskimos, the district of Angmagssalik, so named from the extraordinary abundance of capelin, *angmagssat*, that had formerly frequented its waters. There too he observed many stone-and-sod houses that had been emptied by famine: in one small settlement which had numbered nineteen people only two remained, and they had survived only by eating the corpses of their kin. Holm spent the winter amid this people; he visited their homes, and listened to their tales of suffering and starvation. North of them, they said, the coast was barren and deserted, a fact that was confirmed by later explorers; and in the Angmagssalik district itself Johannes Hansen on Holm's expedition could count but 413 persons.

The exploring party, forced to support itself that winter, could render very little help to the hard-pressed aborigines, but Holm's report (1888–9 and 1914), published after his return to Denmark, created a sensation. He declared quite bluntly that the East Greenlanders, weakened by perpetual hardships and famines, would soon disappear unless Denmark sped swiftly to their aid; and even if she did, they might still die out, lacking the stamina to endure any longer their fearsome environment.

For reasons that are not quite clear, however, Denmark procrastinated. She knew that many East Greenlanders who had travelled past Kap Farvel in earlier decades to trade with their more civilized kindred had perished from influenza and other diseases to which they had previously been immune, and she feared to open up the newly explored districts to outside influences lest it provoke a wholesale migration to the west that could destroy the migrants and at the same time strip the east coast of all inhabitants. The fluidity of the situation may have perplexed her, for already hunger and contact with the parties of Graah and Holm—the majority of whose personnel were West Greenlanders—had unsettled the eastern population, exciting individual families and small groups to oscillate north and south in a constant quest for food. The escape route through Prins Christian Sund must have been known before the days of European settlement, for Hans Egede tells us that Eskimos from farther east were visiting the southwest coast to trade ivory and other native products for the metal goods brought in by Europeans; and we know for certain that in the nineteenth century some of these visitors remained in the west, because the registers of the Moravian mission in Frederiksdal, a few miles west of Kap Farvel, recorded 609 baptisms of East Greenlanders between 1822 and 1884 (Holm, 1914, p. 184). Holm's visit to Angmagssalik in 1884 revived the flow, and

during the following decade losses from emigration and other causes accelerated the decline in the east coast's population until by 1896 its number had shrunk from 548 to 372, of whom about a dozen were outsiders (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 129). In the first years of the twentieth century, however, the decline ceased, and since then the population has increased so rapidly that in 1964 more than 2,000 descendants of Holm's aborigines were inhabiting Greenland's east coast, nearly all of them concentrated in the two settlements of Angmagssalik and Scoresbysund.

It was Denmark's awakening and sudden leap into action in 1894 that reversed the stream. Holm had discovered that the east coast of Greenland was less inaccessible than it had appeared to previous navigators, who had attempted to penetrate the ice barriers early in the summer instead of near its end, when the floes are more dispersed. Profiting by his discovery Denmark despatched, in August 1894, material, supplies, and personnel for the building of a trading station and a Lutheran mission in a sheltered harbour about 300 miles north of Kap Farvel. Then, on October 10 of the same year, she notified the world that she had established a new settlement at Angmagssalik, on the east coast of Greenland in lat. 65°36N. and long. 37°30 W. and that she intended to enforce there the regulations she had laid down a century earlier for the settlements and trading stations on Greenland's west coast, namely, that Danes and foreigners alike would be prohibited from navigating the coasts and islands adjacent to the new settlement, or from trading with its inhabitants, except in cases of emergency or with the prior permission of the Danish government.

The explorer and writer Ejnar Mikkelsen, whose life has been entwined for nearly fifty years with the lives and progress of the East Greenlanders, summarized the government's action in these words:

> "Conscious of their responsibility to the Greenland population the Danish authorities established in the region, in 1895, a settlement where the Eskimos could obtain firearms in place of their rather inefficient stone-tipped Stone Age harpoons, and iron or steel cutting tools to replace stone ones. Above all, the settlement provided the Eskimos with an opportunity to obtain imported food by trading their surplus hunting products. When hunting failed, the settlement manager was empowered to hand out food to those in need.
>
> "At the same time it was realized that it was important to make the transition from a natural economy to one partly dependent on imported and previously unknown foods as gently as possible.
>
> "The Danish Government assumed responsibility for the distressed Eskimos of East Greenland from purely idealistic motives. All thought of exploiting them or hope of trading profits, even of covering expenses, was excluded. In the first few years of colonization very narrow limits were set to the imported goods, especially food, which East Greenlanders might acquire, and in view of unfortunate experience with native improvidence in West Greenland the trading manager was strictly instructed before buying Eskimo hunting products to find out whether the seller could spare his proffered seal or bear skin, meat or blubber. Vital Eskimo needs like train-oil for heating huts were not to be bought at all. The sale of liquor to Eskimos in East Greenland was—and fortunately still is—prohibited." (Mikkelsen, 1961, pp. 121–2).

The establishment of a trading post and a mission at Angmagssalik did not expand the slender economic resources with which nature had endowed the East Greenlanders, nor did it appreciably change their economic base. They still depended for their livelihood mainly on seals and capelin, but the introduction of rifles and other European implements enabled them to increase their

catch. In addition, they could now market at good prices the pelts of the two land animals, polar bears and foxes, which were comparatively numerous in their area. The pelts of the polar bears had provided them with useful bedskins, and the carcasses with goodly quantities of excellent meat; but this half land-, half sea-mammal nowhere exists in large numbers, and even the most skilful hunter could hardly hope to kill more than a dozen in a whole year. As for foxes, a man possessing steel traps might capture, if unusually lucky, as many as a hundred during the winter months when the fur is prime; but the fox's fur is so perishable that Eskimos considered it useful only for babies, while the flesh is edible only to wolves and starving dogs. Nevertheless, Europe had provided an almost limitless market for both polar-bear and fox pelts since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, and the prices it offered for the fox pelts kept rising from one decade to the next until 1931. In that year it suddenly collapsed; even the pelt of the prized blue fox, which is the commonest Greenland variety, slumped in value to almost profitless depths from which it has never recovered.

Before and after 1900, however, the prices for both fox and polar-bear pelts were high, and with them the East Greenlanders were able to purchase most of their necessities at the trading store. There also they gradually gained a knowledge of money and its uses; and that carried them one step over the threshold into the realm of modern commerce. At the same time the West Greenland catechist who gathered their children into his school, and taught them to read and write, was vastly expanding their horizons in the natural world, while the missionary and his West Greenland converts opened up to them the world of Christian thought. They knew that if ever nature should frown and threaten them with famine again, the white man would remain at their side and from his riches provide their wants. So with all fears of starvation behind them they cheerfully dropped the old harsh customs which the desperate struggle for survival had imposed on them—the murders and the blood-feuds, the infanticide and the abandonment of the aged and the infirm, so sternly condemned by the white man, and also by their now civilized kindred whom they were eager to emulate, and in greater peace of mind than they had known for centuries, they settled down to enjoy the new life which Denmark had brought within their reach.

While Denmark thus extended her jurisdiction over the inhabited parts of east and north (Polar) Greenland, the economic life of the West Greenlanders, and many long-established features in their social life, were undergoing a quiet revolution, provoked by the creeping change of climate which had cast its shadow ahead as early as the 1850's (see p. 43). Administrators had long realized that, barring the discovery of valuable mineral deposits, Greenland's future lay in its fringing waters, not in the narrow border of ice-free land along its shores; and they grew alarmed when, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the six hundred-mile stretch of coast from Disko Bugt to Kap Farvel began gradually to replace its once numerous seal population with fish, principally cod. Its human inhabitants immediately reacted to the change. The seal hunters began to lay aside their kayaks and their sealing harpoons, seek a livelihood from fishing, and train their sons for the same occupation;

and a few Danish traders promoted an embryo fishing industry which their employer, the Royal Greenland Trade, took over from them about the end of the century.

Now the flesh of the seal had always been the main food of the Greenlanders, its blubber their source of oil to cook their food, and to light and warm their homes, and its skin the material for much of their clothing. Rink estimated around 1870 that

> "The animals killed amount to about 89,000 seals, 700 white whales and narwhales, 2 or 3 large whales, besides one or two carcasses of the same. In order to calculate the quantity of food these animals yield, we must remember that some of them in certain instances are eaten skin and all . . . Taking this into account, the food resulting will amount to 7 millions of pounds, not reckoning the refuse devoured by the dogs. If we moreover subtract 600,000 pounds for these animals, the rest will give about 2 pounds a day for individuals. Of the sealskins about 40,000 are exported and 49,000 made use of in Greenland. The whole production of blubber may be calculated at 2,050 tuns,[1] of which 1,450 tuns are exported, and 500 tuns are consumed in Greenland as lamp-oil in addition to 100 tuns which are comprised in the above-named food." (Rink, 1877, pp. 129–30).

Large whales such as the Greenland or right whale naturally carried far greater quantities of meat and oil than seals; but by 1870 those monsters, always comparatively scarce, had been so depleted on the eastern side of Davis Strait and Baffin Bay that neither Greenlanders nor Europeans troubled to hunt them (Rink, 1877, p. 346). There existed, of course, a few land animals, but only the caribou was important because it offered nutritious meat and the warmest and lightest of furs for arctic clothing. In earlier days most Greenland families had looked forward to their summer caribou hunt in secluded mountain valleys with the same eagerness as inland Europeans view today a long vacation at the seaside. The introduction of fire-arms, however, had speedily changed the picture; for whereas Greenland hunters between 1845 and 1849 could ruthlessly slaughter about 25,000 animals yearly and export approximately 16,000 of their hides, twenty years later, from 1868 to 1872, they succeeded in killing only about 1,000 caribou annually and exporting perhaps 6 hides. This near-extermination of the caribou brought considerable distress to the previously flourishing settlements of Holsteinsborg and Sukkertoppen, in whose vicinity had roamed the largest herds.

Nature robbed the West Greenlanders of their seals, therefore, without supplying them with adequate substitutes. In one slowly descending blow she deprived them of their hereditary occupation, their traditional diet, and the main material for their clothing and their tents. The cod that now swarmed in their waters offered a diet as nourishing, perhaps, as seal meat; but even Greenlanders could not clothe their families with fish-skins, or light and warm their homes with raw fish oil.

The slight modification of climate which replaced west Greenland's seals with cod brought other changes. European goods became increasingly indispensable to the West Greenlanders, who could no longer pay for them with seal blubber and sealskins, but only with fish; and the collection, processing, and marketing of fish required special boats, together with facilities for building

[1] "A tun (252 gallons without the cask) of seal-oil was sold at the rate of 21*l.* 18*s.* in the year 1844; 23*l.* 9*s.* in 1858; 31*l.* 18*s.* in 1864; and 27*l.* 8*s.* in 1870" at auctions in Copenhagen (Rink, 1877, p. 407).

and repairing them. They required, also, canneries and salting-houses as near as possible to the fishing-grounds in order that vessels both large and small might load and unload in safety. Neither the one-man kayak of the seal-hunter, nor the open 25-foot travelling umiak rowed by his women-folk, was suitable for fishing; in any case, he could no longer spare enough sealskins to cover the frames of those craft. Consequently, in addition to buying European foods and European clothing, the West Greenlanders had now to purchase wooden boats, or the lumber to build them, and, if possible, too, newly invented oil-burning engines to drive them, so that they would be faster, and on this dangerous coast safer, than sailing vessels. Their need for motor-boats grew, indeed, as the climate continued to ameliorate, and fewer west Greenland fiords froze firmly enough to bear the weight of a sled and dog team; only by boat was it then possible to freight supplies and maintain regular communication between one settlement and another during the long winter. Yet so low at this period was the earning power of the Greenlanders, and so expensive were marine engines, that very few natives could afford either inboard or outboard motors until after the Second World War. The great majority used flat-bottomed row-boats equipped with small sails, and rarely ventured outside the mouths of their fiords except in protected waters.

Dependence on sealing for a livelihood had demanded the dispersal of Greenland's population, since no locality harboured enough seals to maintain for many weeks more than half a dozen or a dozen families.[1] Seals were now disappearing all along the southwest coast, but fish had become so numerous that they could support communities of several hundred people the whole year round. By providing a new and seemingly stable base for villages of moderate size they fuelled the growing desire of the Greenlanders to end their seasonal wanderings and enjoy the uninterrupted pleasures and facilities of urban or semi-urban life—a desire that had been fostered by the early missionaries, particularly the Moravians, for religious and educational reasons, but discountenanced by Danish traders and administrators because it diminished the harvest of seals, lowered the production of blubber and hides, impoverished the natives, and on more than one occasion brought famine and starvation. The fishing industry, unlike the sealing, prospered from moderate concentrations of population. It encouraged the gathering together of numerous families and their erection of year-round homes close to the canneries and salting houses to which the men brought in their catch, and the nascent urbanization thus promoted gathered strength as the population began to increase again and require larger trading posts, new churches, and more schools.

A special feature of the fishing industry was its direct commercial orientation. It leaned far more heavily on the outside world than the old economy based on sealing, and employed not only men, but a large percentage of the women, who now worked in the canneries instead of spending their days on such purely domestic tasks as the cutting-out and sewing of skin garments. It revolutionized the upbringing of the boys, who took up fishing at an early age

[1]Rink has provided some figures illustrating this dispersal. "In October of the year 1870", he says, "the number of natives in the Danish part of the west coast was 9,588, and of Europeans 237, the population being distributed among 176 winter-stations, viz. 1 with more than 300, 4 with 200 to 300, 19 with 100 to 200, 47 with 50 to 100, 47 with 26 to 50, and 58 with 25 or less inhabitants." (Rink, 1877, p. 166).

and neglected the time-honoured profession of their forefathers; fewer and fewer of them now practised, day after day, how to handle a kayak in a choppy sea, how to harpoon a seal whose small black head alone broke through the surface of the water, and how to drag the carcass across the deck of his frail craft without capsizing. The girls, too, underwent new training. Their grandmothers, perhaps also their mothers, had been taught to cook over stone lamps fired with the blubber of the seal, to cut out the parts for a fur coat without a pattern and sew them together with thread of twisted sinew, and to make for their kayaking husbands sealskin jackets so skilfully stitched that not a drop of moisture could penetrate a seam. But by the late nineteenth century coal-burning stoves had ousted most of the blubber-burning lamps for heating purposes, the Greenlanders had adopted many of the foods and recipes of the Europeans, and some of their clothing was made from European cloth. So now the two- and three-roomed cabins of the ex-sealers seldom murmured the dull scraping of primitive skin-dressing tools, but echoed the whir of sewing machines turned by child dressmakers under the watchful eyes of their mothers or older sisters.

Yet the economic revolution did not bring elysium. An unbroken diet of fish is monotonous, whether it be cod, halibut, or char, and European foods were expensive. The Greenlanders craved the strong dark meat of the seal and other marine mammals, but this was now much scarcer; with the opening of the twentieth century fishing had become the dominant occupation of the Greenlanders south of Disko Bugt and sealing had been relegated to second place. Denmark could not reverse this occupational change unless nature shepherded back to south Greenland the tremendous numbers of seals that had formerly frequented its shores; but nature gave no sign that she would ever restore the conditions of prior centuries. Nevertheless, in two ways Denmark seemed able to minimize the new economy's effect on the diet of the Greenlanders: she might raise their incomes so that they could purchase more imported meat, and she might encourage the raising of more domestic animals, particularly sheep, and revive under proper controls the hunting of whales. During the twentieth century she has tried both these methods with considerable success, but the Greenlanders have imperilled any local solution of their food problems by maintaining a very high birth-rate, which now threatens to create a far larger population than the resources of the island can support.

Nature was not working in solitude when she changed the temperature of Greenland's coastal waters and opened the way to a mighty invasion of commercial fish from more southern climes. Enterprising men of many nations were cooperating with Denmark to reduce the difficulties of navigation in arctic seas, and to draw Greenland closer to the outside world, by exploring and mapping its coastline and land surface, and by improving the ocean-going vessels that linked Europe with America and both continents with the arctic island which lies between them. In 1888 the Norwegian scientist Fridtjof Nansen succeeded in crossing its inland ice from the east coast to the west and, by proving that it was possible with proper equipment to construct and maintain research stations in the middle of the ice cap, released a spate of explorations into several remote districts in an intensive search for useful minerals. In the same year the Royal Greenland Trade assigned a steamship to the Greenland

trade, and that first merchant vessel to navigate its fiords under power performed in three round-trips the task that in 1875 had required nine strongly built sailing barques, none of which could make more than one trip from Denmark and back again.[1] Thenceforth Greenland seemed no more distant from Denmark than Moscow, and it was no longer geographical barriers which shielded her from the outside world but political ones. The trading company, of course, did not immediately withdraw all its sailing barques from Greenland waters but used them for coastal traffic, and only in 1925 beached the last survivor at the dockyard of the Danish navy in the homeland.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, then, fate's prayer-laden wheel was gathering momentum and the world rapidly shrinking. Motor-ships and motor-cars were pressing behind the steamers and steam locomotives, and monstrous mechanical birds were struggling to wing their way through the air. By 1893 the published reports of several scientific expeditions, and travellers' tales of Greenland's serrated coasts, icy mountains, and strange inhabitants, had aroused so much curiosity in Europe and America that a Danish tourist company, anticipating by only a few years the "Summer Cruises to the Midnight Sun" conducted to Spitsbergen by the Cunard Steamship Company, requested permission to organize holiday excursions to mysterious Greenland. The Danish government refused the application, fearing that a tide of tourism might seriously endanger the health and welfare of the Greenlanders and also bring into question its own trade monopoly. Nevertheless, many of the natives lodged an inward grievance; they sensed that new breezes were reaching their country from across the ocean and believed, not without reason, that the motherland was wrongfully denying them any important role in their own land and at the same time holding them aloof from the great world beyond their shores. The smouldering unrest of this segment of the population found expression in a letter which a seal-hunter wrote on 13 September, 1905:

> "The Greenlanders have also progressed in knowledge and development, but in spite of this they have never got any further. By this I mean that we were given more and more enlightenment, more and more actual knowledge, but that which should be the fruit of knowledge, *viz.* better conditions of life, and better positions we were never given. And therefore we were bound to stand still, in spite of our development.
>
> "It is seen how the more intelligent Greenland children make progress and develop, while they are receiving instruction. But when the period of instruction is at an end, they are not given any chances and must fall back upon the ordinary Greenland existence, in which they do not need all they have learned. These young Greenlanders might be compared to candles which are lighted, but only to be extinguished again. They are led forth to a certain point, and at the very moment they arrive at the age when their possibilities should stand the test, they are left to their own devices. If a Greenlander were taken in hand and given continued instruction until he had become receptible, then it would soon appear to what lengths he might go. To-day the Greenlanders may attain subordinate positions as managers of outposts under the chief traders. They may be native managers of outposts who have better brains and are more efficient than many a Danish 'Kolonibestyrer', but they can never attain that position, and that is because all higher posts are closed to them, only because they are Greenlanders.
>
> "Here I must not forget to mention that the mission gives us access to the highest positions as chief catechists and clergymen; these are tasks which we are supposed to be able to fulfil, when only we are given sufficient training. . . . When we can be trained to be clergymen, why then should it not be possible to admit us to other influential positions?" (Ostermann, 1929a, p. 198).

[1] A later steamer, the *Hans Egede*, made four round-trips each season.

Some figures supplied by Rink (1877, pp. 174–5) thirty-five years earlier attest the justice of the seal-hunter's complaint. I have arranged them in tabular form:

Table 3. West Greenland population in 1870.

Total native population: 9,588

Seal-hunters: 1846, of whom 291 used nets only.

Fishermen: 339

Wage earners: 182, of whom 53 were teachers and 129 employed by the Royal Greenland Trade. Of the latter, 12 were outpost traders, 15 headmen and boatswains, 14 carpenters and smiths, 19 coopers, 15 cooks, and 54 sailors and labourers.

Total white population: 237

Missionaries: 19, of whom 8 were Danish Lutheran and 11 Moravian

Employed by Royal Greenland Trade: 95

Employed at cryolite mine at Ivigtut: 38

The restless Greenlanders found a champion in Mylius-Erichsen, who sharply criticized Denmark's colonial administration after his return from the expedition to Kap York. He attacked the principles which still guided the administration, and, reiterating arguments that had been advanced by previous critics, advocated the abolition of the government's quarantine and its monopoly of all trade. These may have benefited the Greenlanders down to the mid-nineteenth century, he thought, but in a rapidly expanding world they could not continue indefinitely; indeed, other nations were already knocking at Greenland's gates, especially in the far northern district around Kap York. Denmark had given the island a wholly artificial economy, one in which Danish officials in Copenhagen, not the usual laws of supply and demand, regulated the prices of goods and services; and in so doing she had rejected all the rules that governed commerce in the rest of the civilized world. Such an economy stifled enterprise and destroyed initiative by preventing the industrious and skilful worker from accumulating wealth, thereby holding him down to a level little above that of his unambitious and ne'er-do-well neighbour. In the long breathing-space Denmark had gained from setting up this artificial system she had failed to train the Greenlanders, educationally and in other ways, for the day when the barriers that now shielded their island would be trampled down and expose them, unprepared and helpless, to the ruthlessly competitive world of modern commerce.

Mylius-Erichsen's lectures and articles inflamed a controversy that was already raging. They so stirred the stagnating government that it built a faster steamer, the *Hans Egede*, to ply between Copenhagen and Godthåb, and it inaugurated a shipping service along Greenland's west coast to link together the larger settlements. It relaxed its trading monopoly a little by granting to a private individual, for twenty-years, a comprehensive mining concession which, unfortunately, yielded only a trifling quantity of copper and graphite; and in 1906 it instructed the Royal Greenland Trade to open a small coal mine on the Nugssuaq peninsula. The latter, efficiently worked with native labour, furnished the government steamer and many Greenland homes with much-needed fuel until the exhaustion of its beds compelled the company to close

it down and transfer its machinery and timber to Qutdligssat, whose coal mine is still operating.

These were positive actions which the government could carry through without long consultations; but it had noted Mylius-Erichsen's other criticisms, too, when it drafted and pushed through parliament a hastily drawn-up bill to reform both the educational system in Greenland and the Lutheran mission, which had just gathered into its fold all the stations of the Moravians. That bill, the Church and School Act of 1905 endeavoured to reorganize the mission on the pattern of Denmark's own national church. It divided the island into eleven parishes, each to be served by an ordained clergyman; and it grouped all the parishes under two co-equal archdeacons, one to be stationed at Godthåb and the other at Egedesminde, both directly answerable to the Bishop of Zealand, the head of Denmark's Lutheran Church. Furthermore, it decreed that as many as possible of the clergy should be Greenlanders, educated at the Godthåb seminary and subsequently trained for several years in Denmark. This act went into force immediately, although, with pardonable inconsistency, the government continued to call its new colonial church a "mission" and only in 1912 officially recognized the title it still bears, the "Church of Greenland".

Denmark's formula for transforming her far-off Greenland mission into a semi-autonomous church seems extremely simple, yet the result was a happy one. The highest positions in the new church remained, and still remain, in Danish hands, but Greenlanders gradually replaced Europeans in most of the parishes and in large measure controlled the church's administration. Thus whereas in 1910 only 4 of the 16 pastors were Greenlanders, 10 out of 17 in 1920, 12 out of 18 in 1930, and 13 out of 19 in 1957 had been born and raised on the island. True, both archdeacons were Danes still, but the time seemed near at hand when at least one would be of native or part-native descent. More important than the actual race of the pastors, however, has been their training and outlook, their life-long devotion to Greenland[1] and their tireless concern for the welfare of all its inhabitants, Danes and Greenlanders, without distinction. These well-educated descendants of a people who were primitive savages only two centuries ago are today so completely bilingual—some indeed multi-lingual—that they can pursue their calling in Denmark as efficiently as in Greenland; for in Europe their racial origin often passes unnoticed, since all of them, or virtually all, carry some proportion of European blood in their veins; and even when their features betray their part-Eskimo descent the anomaly attracts little attention, because they can expound the culture and faith of the mother-country with the same intelligence and dignity as the children of Denmark's European soil.

The ecclesiastical reorganization encountered little opposition, but the educational reform which accompanied it evoked a storm of protest. Influential Danes objected that a world which was swiftly transmuting itself through science and industry could no longer abandon so vital a field as education to the ultra-conservative hands of any religious organization, even one that was regulated by the state. Before Denmark had established any formal

[1]Danish missionaries had served in Greenland, on an average, only ten years (Rink, 1877, p. 283).

government in Greenland Hans Egede had improvised a rudimentary system of education under the aegis of his mission, and under the banner of the mission education had been marching ever since. But even the Bishop of Zealand in Copenhagen, who remained Bishop and Titular Head of the new Church of Greenland, ruled in doctrinal matters only. In every other respect the church, like the mission from which it grew, was a government institution, a branch of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs. It was the Ministry which supplied its annual budget, appointed its clergy, and imposed on it the duty of providing all needful education in the colony, secular as well as religious.

The Act of 1905 did not alter this relationship, did not remove secular education in Greenland from the control of its new church. It merely directed the Ministry to set aside larger funds for education, and to raise its level by establishing a modern high school that would train more Greenlanders for the government's administrative and trade services, and prepare the most promising pupils for further education and specialization in Denmark. In obedience to this mandate the Church of Greenland, the Ministry's educational arm, built in 1906–7 a new and larger seminary in Godthåb, offered free tuition there, and free board and lodging, to forty students instead of only eight, and divided them into two classes, each to follow a three-year curriculum which would lay special emphasis on the teaching of Danish. Both Danish and Greenlandic scholars then set about preparing new textbooks from which to teach these high-school students geography, history, physics, the Eskimo and the Danish languages, hygiene, pedagogics, manual work, and gymnastics[1]; and the school made such rapid progress that within a few years "it might very well bear comparison with modern high schools in countries with an old civilization" (Schultz-Lorentzen, 1929, p. 356). It had published on its own press not only the new school-books, but the first Greenlandic song-book and the works of two Greenlandic poets, Jonathan Petersen and Hendrik Lund (Williamson, 1953, p. 88); and the Director of the seminary, the scholar Schultz-Lorentzen, was diligently compiling an authoritative, up-to-date Eskimo-Danish dictionary which was translated shortly afterwards into English, and is indispensable today for any study of the Eskimo language.

All parties agreed that in establishing a high school at Godthåb the government had taken a step in the right direction. Many people, however, considered it a first step only, and continued to demand further changes. The colony, they said, needed more than one high school, or else a high school with room for several times the number of pupils the Godthåb one could accommodate; and the primary schools everywhere should be upgraded so that they could prepare the pupils for the secondary school and deepen the general level of knowledge. They pointed to the colony's growing population, already about 12,000, nearly double its number in Egede's day; and they predicted that it would double again within forty years if it maintained its current growth rate of approximately 1.2 per cent per annum. Educating only forty students yearly to junior matriculation level, and an extra dozen beyond that level,

[1]Cf. Ostermann, 1929b, pp. 345–6 and Schultz-Lorentzen, 1929, p. 356. It is interesting to note that the high school continued the seminary's policy of encouraging its students to acquire proficiency in handling the kayak so that later they might develop into skilful seal-hunters.

would never supply all the administrators, clergymen, teachers, doctors, and other leaders that the people urgently needed if they were to take part in the administration and development of their country on a parity with their European rulers, as Rink and other far-seeing Danes had visualized and so many Greenlanders desired. True, the government had taken one small step in this direction, but only one. It offered two scholarships each year to the brightest boys in each high-school class so that they might train in theology and pedagogy in Denmark; but down to 1925 only thirteen pupils had accepted these scholarships, and of the thirteen only nine had been confirmed (Ostermann, 1929b, p. 346).

The rapid growth of Greenland's population during the last decades of the nineteenth century did indeed present Greenland's administrators with a new and very significant phenomenon which they could not overlook. It arose from two causes: the Greenlanders' high birth-rate (36.5 per thousand in west Greenland between 1851 and 1900), and a death-rate (33 per thousand between 1861 and 1900) which was very much higher than in Denmark but slowly dropping. Analysed by age groups, this death-rate proved to be highest among children below the age of five years, great numbers of whom fell victims to respiratory diseases. Almost equally destructive was tuberculosis, which had been transplanted from Europe to Greenland before the Danish colonization—if we may credit Bertelsen (1929, pp. 374–5), northwest Greenland's medical officer during the first quarter of the twentieth century, who estimated that tuberculosis and children's diseases combined were carrying off two-thirds of the population. Cancer and various other diseases accounted for about one-sixth of the deaths; the remaining one-sixth were women who died in childbirth, and men who perished in accidents, virtually all the latter by drowning when their kayaks capsized in rough water. In the years 1861–1900 accidents, 21 to males for every one to females, caused 16.8 per cent of all men's deaths. So frequent, indeed, were the drownings that they bred a phobia, the "kayak phobia", which sometimes forced a hunter to abandon sealing altogether and seek some other means of earning a livelihood.

Nearly every disease present in Europe during the nineteenth century appeared at some time or other in Greenland. The government's quarantine of the island, its insistence that no vessel should sail thither without a clean bill of health from a port medical officer, checked but could not prevent their introduction, one reason being that the regulation was not enforceable on foreign ships that called at Greenland ports for shelter or supplies. It was an Eskimo boy returning home from Denmark who in 1733 carried to the colony that first epidemic of smallpox which swept away between 2,000 and 3,000 of its inhabitants; but it was foreign whaling vessels which brought three later epidemics of the same disease, the first of which, the epidemic of 1800, carried off at least 500 individuals, 352 of them in the Holsteinsborg district alone. Denmark introduced vaccination right after this disaster, and before the end of the century had extended it so widely as to dispel the danger of any future epidemic of smallpox attaining such serious proportions. Her quarantine, however, so often justified on the ground that it protected the Greenlanders from European diseases, failed to keep away other diseases, particularly the "ships'

diseases", influenza, bronchitis, and similar maladies which spread up and down the coast after the arrival of the first vessel in the spring of each year.

> "For every single district it can be proved that the highest sick rate is immediately consequent upon the time of the year when the direct communication with Europe opens.
> "No epidemic is of similar significance to the Greenlanders as the various bronchial and enteric catarrhs, which are annually introduced into the country through the communication with Europe." (Bertelsen, 1929, p. 383).

In 1872 the dreaded syphilis took root at Arsuk, the port of Ivigtut, brought by Danish seamen or workers at the cryolite mine. The situation became worse, and in 1882 the government isolated the port and stationed a doctor there to treat all cases in the mining company's small hospital. It withdrew the doctor in 1893 after no new infectious case had come to light for two years, and thereafter Greenland remained free from this disease until the Second World War.

Nature herself seemed to have ordained that the mortality rate in Greenland should always be higher than in Denmark, not only because the colony's climate was much harsher and the dangers of travel much greater, but because the difficulty of keeping babies and little children well-nourished and adequately protected from the cold at all seasons of the year appeared well-nigh insuperable, especially after caribou became scarce and the Greenlanders had to resort to European clothing. Throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries little attention was paid to sanitation or hygiene; even today almost no settlement possesses a community sewerage system because the rocky uneven ground and wide dispersion of the buildings would rocket beyond calculation the cost of building utilidors or of blasting sewers deep enough to escape the winter frost. Health requirements inevitably yielded, therefore, to the necessity of survival. In the traditional multi-family dwellings no individual could command more than a very few cubic feet of living-space, and within that limited area the bitter arctic climate imprisoned him for twelve or sixteen hours each day during several months of the year. The early nineteenth century, when more and more families deserted those ancient dwellings and built for themselves individual homes, brought little improvement, for the only fuel then available in this treeless land, seal-oil, gave so little warmth that every family huddled throughout the winter in a single room where one coughing individual infallibly infected the entire household. For many families, indeed, the small individual home increased the hazards of health, because at the close of winter it imposed less pressure than the old communal dwellings to move into draughty tents and let nature aerate and disinfect the house until the fall. Nor did the increasing adoption of European clothing prove an unmixed blessing. The old fur garments had hung loosely, permitting air to circulate underneath while keeping out the cold with their long fringes; but European underclothes fitted tightly, and were often worn continuously until they rotted away (as I observed in arctic Alaska also during the first quarter of this century), because no one spared a thought for bodily cleanliness or dreamed of soap and a weekly clothes-line to spruce up the family linen. Indeed, as long as seal-oil remained the only source of energy in the Greenland home for both light and fuel, it was not possible to melt more ice or snow than would quench the family thirst. The fastidious clothes-line had therefore to

await the introduction of metal stoves and the opening of the coal seams on the Nugssuaq peninsula in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In southwest Greenland housing improved considerably at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the ex-sealers began to concentrate at the fishing settlements and the government subsidized their building of new homes. The first requirement of the nascent fishing industry, however, was capital expenditure on boats and fishing tackle, not on radical improvements in housing. The latter came later with larger government investments, increasing monetary incomes from the sale and processing of fish, and a more prosperous economy.

Even the most prosperous people need an efficient medical service, and that was very difficult to provide on Greenland's rock-strewn and, over long periods, ice-bound coast. Until the government, in 1793, stationed a permanent doctor at Jakobshavn, in Disko Bugt, neither Greenlanders nor Danes could obtain skilled medical care except from the surgeons of whaling and trading ships that happened to put in at their communities. In 1839 Denmark posted a second doctor at Godthåb, and in 1851 a third at Julianehåb; then in all three settlements she opened hospitals, at Jakobshavn in 1853, Godthåb in 1856, and Julianehåb in 1867, which supplied every post of the Royal Greenland Trade with a stock of common medicines and bandages for the use of all who needed them. In 1874 she divided the west coast into three districts, each centred on a doctor and his hospital, and this organization prevailed until 1905. Medicines and hospital care were of course free, and the doctors, being government employees working for fixed salaries, forbidden to levy any charges. They were expected to make at least one complete round of their districts every year, a task not lightly undertaken during the nineteenth century, when only umiaks or small sailing boats were available for journeys during the season of open water, and only dog-sleds during the months of winter. Rink has briefly summed up the situation as he knew it in 1870:

> "Medical attendance is very scarce in Greenland. There being only three medical men appointed for a coastline of more than 1,000 miles, sending for them in cases of sickness is generally out of the question. However, they have to make regular official journeys, visiting every trading station of their districts at least once a year. There are also small infirmaries established in the places in which the physicians reside, in order that they may pursue a particular course of treatment with certain patients. Medicines are sent out to all the trading stations, and distributed to the inhabitants. Midwives are appointed in many places, some of whom have spent a year in Denmark in being trained for this position. Of course medicine, as well as every sort of medical aid, are given gratis to the inhabitants. But it must be granted that their public sanitary institutions are very imperfect. . . . The total medical expenditure has averaged of late 944*l.* per annum, out of which 505*l.* was spent on the salaries of the physicians." (Rink, 1877, pp. 285–6).

The nerve centre of each district was the doctor in its principal settlement. North and south of him stretched his line of midwives, Greenlanders whom he had trained for two years in his little hospital, giving them at the same time a short course in nursing and using them as his assistants; as early as Rink's day, apparently, two or three of the more efficient then went on to Denmark for a year's post-graduate training in Copenhagen's big maternity hospital. These midwives were the doctor's front-line soldiers; they fought the health battle in the outposts while their commander directed and reinforced them from his headquarters. It was a system the government had conceived in 1820, and inaugurated nine years later when Dr. Hans Johan Frederich Lerch opened

a one-year concentrated training-school at Claushavn, and published in Eskimo, for the benefit of his trainees, an elementary text-book on midwifery. The scheme took root immediately because it offered the country exactly the service it was needing. White nurses—there were none in Greenland before 1900—even if they had learned to speak the Eskimo language, could not have acquired half of the influence exerted by these daughters of the people, who knew all the local customs and prejudices, possessed relatives in nearly every settlement, yet enjoyed great respect because of their special knowledge and wielded an authority which, every Greenlander knew, the Danish administration would strongly support. The system possessed still another advantage. It opened up a splendid career for Greenland girls just when the ancient way of life was breaking down and the women feeling as frustrated as the men. At no time was there any shortage of volunteers, but during the nineteenth century only a small number could be accepted for training because Greenland could provide no instructors save the three doctors who comprised the colony's medical staff.

This health service could not escape the stagnation that overtook the administration after Rink's departure, and it advanced very little down to the end of the nineteenth century, although its tasks increased as the population grew larger year by year. Pressure from Mylius-Erichsen and other critics then pushed the government into a program of expansion. In 1905 it increased the number of medical districts and recruited additional doctors as fast as they became available, together with fully-trained Danish nurses to superintend the hospitals. In that same year it opened a new hospital at Umanak, north of Disko, and a little later supplied each medical centre with a motor boat so that its doctor could visit his outposts more frequently (Williamson, 1953, p. 88).[1] In 1908 it erected another hospital at Sukkertoppen, and two more, one at Upernavik and the other at Egedesminde, during the First World War. All through the inter-war period, 1918–39, Greenland's health service continued to expand, as set forth by Sveistrup (1949, p. 146) in Table 4:

Table 4. Growth of the health service in Greenland, 1900–35.

				Midwives		*Hospital*
Year	*Physicians*	*Dentists*	*Nurses*	*Denmark trained*	*Greenland trained*	*accommo-dation*
1900	4	0	0	0	?	30
1910	7	0	4	4	80	?
1930	10	2	11	11	89	240
1935	10	1	16	14	98	325

The financial cost of this expansion was high, much higher than it would have been in Denmark because of the difficulties and expense of serving a population scattered among some 165 dwelling-places over a distance of 1,000 or more miles. Sveistrup's figures show (1949, p. 14) that the bill for Greenland's health services rose 15-fold from 1900 to 1935, from 26,685 kroner to 393,459 kroner, an increase per head of population from 2.43 to 23.84 kroner.[2] Denmark, however, never looked back. In the twentieth century she sloughed off for ever the outworn doctrine that a colony should bring financial profit to the motherland, and cheerfully accepted only the responsibilities.

[1]Dr. A. E. Porsild tells me that his father, Dr. M. P. Porsild, imported Greenland's first motor-boat to serve the biological station at Godhavn.

[2]These figures take no account, of course, of the changed value of the krone.

CHAPTER 4

From seal-hunters to fishermen: 1905–39

With the first years of the twentieth century we reach a turning-point in Greenland's history, perhaps also in the history of the whole human race. Man's inventions of the electric generator, the internal combustion engine, the aeroplane, and the radio vastly increased the speed and range of communication and of transport, brought the far ends of the earth into conversational distance of one another, and dragged Greenland out of the isolation and silence of her arctic sea into the tempestuous ocean of mankind's ceaselessly quarrelling nations. All the world was now one stage and, willy-nilly, Greenland had to play her part on it. It might be a very poor part: indeed, how could it be other? But every actor who yearns to reach the limelight, whether by the stage's main entrance or through a half-concealed trap-door, has to know his lines and act them with conviction if he is to survive the first performance. And Greenland, with Denmark's help, had yet to write her lines.

Nature warned Denmark in the second half of the nineteenth century that a profound economic and social change was impending, when, very slowly, she began to raise by one or two degrees the temperature of the air and sea-water in western Greenland, to banish most of its seals, and to send in shoals of cod and other fish. Her interference climaxed about 1930, when the warmer water reached as far north as Umanak. From that year on she seemed to be satisfied with her handiwork—at least until quite recently, for some biologists now suspect that she is cooling the sea-water very slightly again, reducing the numbers of fish and bringing back more seals. However that may be (and scientists are still wrangling over the matter), since the beginning of the twentieth century she has forced the majority of the Greenlanders to build their economy on a new base which must inevitably transform the entire pattern of their lives. And that new base they have not yet completed.

Fortunately or unfortunately, man adapts himself to modifications in his physical environment more readily than most animals. We need not wonder then that during the first decade of this century, while Denmark was cautiously deliberating the constitutional changes her colony's slow evolution would demand, the West Greenlanders, deliberately and on their own initiative, were reshaping their lives to conform with nature's pressure, convinced at last that the cod, which had so often visited their shores during the preceding fifty years and vanished again, were this time remaining and even increasing, while simultaneously the seals their forefathers had hunted for their daily food throughout the span of memory were definitely retreating. So the ex-hunters tacked their

sails, and with the courage of ancient mariners set their helms on a new course over an uncharted sea of which they lacked all experience.[1]

> "These hunters have become fishermen; and a distinct change has taken place in their mentality. It was many years before the ordinary Greenlander dared to go in for fishing. This was a despised occupation . . . It was necessity which made him a fisherman; today he is proud of it. . . . The first fishing station in central Greenland was established in 1910. Now [1961] there are some eighty landing depots where cod is washed, salted, packed, and shipped to Roman Catholic countries in southern Europe, and where large quantities of frozen fish are loaded into ships for export to the world's large fish markets." (Therkilsen, 1961, p. 106).

In history's long view the transformation of the Greenlanders occurred suddenly, but to participants in the event the change was slow and very discouraging. The hunters were ill-prepared to move from their sealing outposts into fishing settlements, where they would certainly require more cash than sealing had ever provided, since fish could give them neither clothing material, nor the meat which had always been their staple diet. Even though their catch of fish mounted steadily, as shown by the table below (from Ad. S. Jensen, 1928, p. 345):

Table 5. Weight of cod bought annually from Greenlanders (in kg.).

1912–16	*1917–25*	*1926*[2]
23,500–124,500	243,500–956,000	2,055,000

their individual incomes remained for many years quite inadequate to pay for the boats and fishing-gear they needed, comfortable dwellings, clothing for themselves and their families, and a standard of living at least equal to, and preferably higher than the rather miserable one that had hitherto been their lot. They themselves possessed no capital, and at the outset no means of acquiring any through their own exertions; yet no other ladder could help them out of the economic pit into which nature had plunged them. Only the government could provide the investment funds their situation demanded; it alone controlled the means to augment their pitiful incomes.

Three means seemed obvious: subsidies, exploitation of new resources, and the promotion of subsidiary industries, and the government tried all three. From 1914 onward it subsidized new housing by granting interest-free loans, larger to its employees than to Greenlanders who worked on their own. With this subsidy it stimulated the building of a great many new homes, especially after 1926 when it superimposed district councils on top of municipal ones and granted them also the authority to provide building loans. Construction then surged forward and for a brief period attained the proportions of a small boom. But the boom subsided almost as quickly as it had started, for by 1932 the demand for new dwellings had slackened, partly owing to a shortage of timber, but mainly because the growth of the settlements and the increasing prosperity of the fishing industry had awakened a desire for improved houses, equipped with running water, electric light, and other facilities, all of which called for

[1]Foreign nations began to take an interest in Davis Strait cod-fishing about 1840, but did not pursue it on any large scale until 1929.

[2]In this year the Greenlanders sold also 270,000 kg. of dressed halibut, partly salted and partly tinned, together with lesser amounts of other fish.

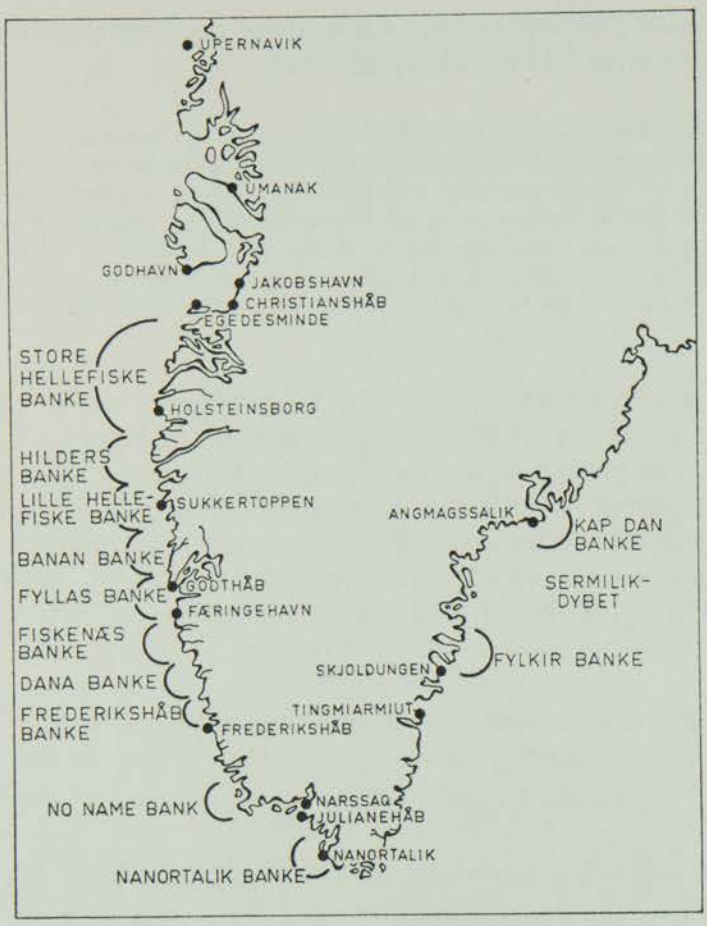

Fig. 4. Greenland's fishing banks. (From 'Bogen om Grønland', 1962, p. 235).

the investment of much more capital than Greenland herself could furnish from the slim deposits in her peoples' savings-bank, or from the funds her councils derived from the 20 per cent tax on exports. By mischance, too, Denmark at that time was in no position to pour more money into her colony than was absolutely imperative, because she and all other countries in western Europe were battling their way out of the grave economic depression which had gripped the free world. And no sooner had this depression passed than the Second World War erupted; Germany tried to set up weather stations in east Greenland, and west Greenland, severed entirely from Europe, turned to the United States to protect her from invasion and in all internal matters endeavoured to make shift on her own. So for about fifteen years the housing program which had advanced so well for two decades drifted becalmed, unable to continue its progress until the collapse of Germany reopened a path for the friendly financial breezes from the motherland which had previously filled its sails.

Until the depression struck her, however, Denmark had been very prosperous, and she had invested large sums, not only in her colony's housing program but in its fishing industry and in experiments with other projects that might raise the cash incomes of the Greenlanders, or—what would amount to the same thing—reduce their dependence on imported necessities. As early as 1906 she authorized the botanist, Morten P. Porsild, to build with private funds a permanent scientific station at Godhavn, on Disko island, and from that

base to investigate the biological resources of northern Greenland, where seal-hunting seemed likely to remain for many years to come the dominant occupation of the inhabitants. Meanwhile other scientists were studying the milder climate which had settled over south Greenland about 1900, and comparing it with the climate of the same region nine hundred years earlier when Erik the Red and his Norsemen crossed over from Iceland and colonized it. Those first settlers, they pointed out, had been farmers rather than fishermen; and they suggested that if the sheep brought in by the Moravians in 1759 had managed to survive and even increase, despite a deterioration of the climate, surely now that the climate was as mild again as in the days of the Norsemen they should multiply many-fold, and with their meat and wool close a serious gap in the economy of the south coast, where the Greenlanders had been facing a grave shortage of meat and clothing since the decline of sealing.

The government listened to their arguments, and in 1906 set up a small sheep-breeding station on the site of an old Norse farm at Frederiksdal. So successful was this experiment that nine years afterwards, in 1915, it introduced 175 sheep and a few Icelandic horses to stock a much larger station at Julianehåb.[1] Thirty years later, we read:

> "The [Julianehåb] research station engages young Greenlanders as apprentices for a period of three or four years, and they then receive on loan a flock of sheep and at the same time a loan free of interest for the building of a house and pens. Other interested and suitable persons may also borrow small flocks of sheep.
>
> "When the new sheep farmer has got well under way, he returns the same number of sheep as he borrowed, and these sheep are then lent to others. The money loans are likewise after a certain period allowed for the starting of the sheep farm, repaid by deduction of ⅓ or ¼ of the amounts at which the sheep farmer sells his products." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept. 1949, p. 54).

The Julianehåb station prospered from the very first year of its opening. In 1919 it was carrying, besides sheep, 60 horned cattle (all but three the property of Greenlanders), a few Icelandic horses (the only ones in Greenland), and 186 goats, these last mainly for their milk. It had even tried to breed rabbits, but abandoned the experiment when the Greenlanders displayed no interest in that animal. By 1926 the district was pasturing—mostly at Igaliko, the seat of the Bishop's See in Viking days—70 cattle, 3,000 ewes with an unreported number of lambs, and about 700 goats, a stock large enough to warrant the construction of an abattoir. The government erected what seemed to be an adequate plant at Julianehåb in 1929, but replaced it in 1952 with a more modern one at Narssaq, 25 miles farther north up the same fiord, site of an ancient Norse farm whose unusually mild climate had encouraged the Danish manager of the local trading post in 1850 to keep 3 cows, 3 calves, 1 bull and 12 sheep, an accomplishment which seemed at that date quite remarkable (Rink, 1877, pp. 317–8). When the government erected the new abattoir there in 1952, 30 full-time and 250 part-time farmers were raising about 20,000 sheep in south Greenland on sites which had been farmed previously by the Norsemen (Findlay, 1953, p. 166), and the industry was supplying welcome quantities of meat to the whole coast from Godthåb to Kap Farvel. Its yield of clothing material, however, was disappointing. "The Greenland sheep only

[1]The first sheep imported came from the Faroe Islands; in 1915 they came from Iceland (Birket-Smith, 1928, p. 140).

yield 2 kg wool and often lose part of it in the mountains" (Kampp, 1964, p. 97).

Table 6. Stock of sheep, 1915–53. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 24).

Year	*No. of sheep*	*Year*	*No. of sheep*	*Year*	*No. of sheep*
1915	300	1940	10,000	1949	11,000
1925	1,600	1945	17,000	1950	14,000
1935	7,000	1948	22,000	1953	19,000

"The census was taken after the end of the slaughtering season. In the summertime the stocks are about 50 per cent in excess of the figures given.

"The table shows the vigorous development of the trade but at the same time it gives evidence of the great losses that may be caused by inclement weather conditions. Between 1948 and 1949 the stock was halved due to an uncommonly long, severe and stormy winter with snow and ice everywhere preventing the sheep from finding feed in the open." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 24).

Less successful than the sheep-farming was the government's flirtation with fox-farming, which it started at Godthåb in 1913. Long before that year, and after it down to 1931 when the world's fur market collapsed at the beginning of the "Great Depression", the Eskimos of Alaska and Canada had found a reasonably firm economic base in the trapping of wild foxes and such other fur-bearers, e.g. muskrats, wolves, and polar bears, as happened to exist in their territory. The Greenlanders too had obtained a considerable revenue from fox furs since the time of Hans Egede, but in their country the animals were so much less plentiful than in arctic America—probably because they could find less food—that even the most skilful trapper could never gain a livelihood from their furs alone. By 1913, however, waste from the fishing-stations offered an abundant supply of food for the breeding of foxes in captivity, a new industry which had recently sprung up on both sides of the Atlantic; and the administration purchased and brought in enough animals to stock a small experimental farm at Godthåb, which was then becoming an important fishing centre. To its dismay, however, the fish-offal diet impaired the quality of the furs and lowered their value on the world's market. This unexpected set-back, along with difficulties in obtaining regular supplies of fish-offal, discouraged any development of fox-farming, but a rumour was circulating in the summer of 1964 that an enterprising individual was starting a similar experiment with mink.

It is comforting to be reminded from time to time that our modern age of mass production, growing automation, and excessive populations has not yet exterminated the star-gazing philosophers who look beyond our galaxy and beneath the surface of crude matter for realities which our engineers cannot blue-print, nor our scientists interpret with mathematical formulae or measure in light-years and micro-curies. It occasionally happens, however, that these dreamers become confused by the phantoms of the natural world, and they steer us on courses which carry us perilously near the reefs. In the 1950's China's visionary statesmen, eager to buttress their country's sagging economy, compelled millions of obedient peasants to set up primitive kilns in their back-yards and labour night and day to produce pig iron that would increase the nation's steel output. Greenland's administrators suffered a similar but less

magnificent aberration during the first two decades of the century, when, distressed by the poverty of their wards, they urged the seal-hunters and the fishermen to scour the shores and scale the cliffs of their homeland for eider ducks, murres, and other sea birds whose irridescent coats, fashioned by women in their homes into attractive rugs and mats, would lure the coins from the pockets of souvenir-hunting Europeans and increase the family incomes. The value of handicrafts, however, is psychological rather than pecuniary; only in rare cases do they bring in more than pin-money.[1] The bird scheme was in fact harmful, for it destroyed so many ducks as to eliminate any immediate hope of a thriving eider-down industry, and even to threaten the survival of the birds themselves along the inhabited coasts of the island.[2]

> "It is supposed that the number of eiderduck now shot in the course of a year amounts to 150,000 and of Brünnich murre to 100,000, the Government purchase of eiderskin rugs, which was started in 1903, having given an enormous impetus to bird hunting. This has led to such wholesale killing—notably south of Disko Bay—as to be absolutely destructive to the stock of eiderduck, and it will prove impossible to continue this traffic for any great length of time. . . . The average production of down was in West Greenland 1920–26 531 kg annually." (Birket-Smith, 1928, p. 156).

Geologists and prospectors failed to discover any valuable mineral deposits in Greenland during the half century that preceded the Second World War, but by raising the royalties on the cryolite mine the government drew an income handsome enough to move the accounts of its colonial operations out of the red column into the black. The Greenlanders themselves, however, reaped no direct benefit from the ore. As far as they knew, the land offered them no resources of any kind that would swell their wretched incomes; apart from supporting a useful number of sheep, its main service was to provide safe foundations for their dwellings and abundant fresh water or salt-free ice. It was the sea which had always given them their daily bread, and it was seaward,

[1]For a recent summary of Greenland handicrafts compare:

"The Greenlanders, like other people, make souvenirs for visitors. Domestic crafts bring welcome earnings, particularly to old men and women who have no other sources of income. The objects are principally made in the winter season, when there is plenty of time. They are either sold to wholesale buyers or kept until the summer, when they may bring in more by retail sale. The raw materials, ivory, woods, skin, and straw, are made into useful articles like slippers, bags, belts, cushions, stools, birdskin rugs, baskets, bone forks, scarfs, and brooches, as well as pure souvenirs like miniature kayaks and boats, skin embroideries, model heads, wooden masks, and a variety of free compositions in bone and ivory.

"For a long time there was no organized marketing of the products, and in most localities they are still sold direct, at prices not fixed in advance. In 1938, a sales association was founded, centred in Copenhagen. Local representatives in Greenland collected the articles and sent them to Copenhagen for marketing. During the war they were collected in Julianehaab and sold, with good profit, to the Americans. Many handsome and tasteful objects have been sold, though the quality declined with heavy sales during the war.

"Recently home craft centres have been established at a few places, and private businesses have begun to distribute the articles. . . . There is little doubt that the production and marketing of handicraft products has a good future in Greenland, provided that the quality is maintained. If it is, the Greenlanders will also be encouraged to develop artistic originality." (Nielsen, 1961, pp. 89–90).

[2]Dr. A. E. Porsild doubts that the rug industry contributed greatly to the diminution of the sea-bird population. The Greenlanders, he believes, shot the birds primarily for their meat, which they consider a great delicacy, and they robbed the nests of the eider ducks for their down. The skins were merely an added bounty.

not landward, that they continued to turn their eyes. Seals were now scarce in south Greenland but fish plentiful, and from 1915 onward the latter seemed to increase in numbers year by year; and it was not cod alone which swarmed off the headlands and worked their way into the winding fiords, but halibut of two species, red-fish, wolf-fish, shark, and capelin. Even whales began to show themselves more frequently, especially off Holsteinsborg, after the English whalers withdrew from Davis Strait at the outbreak of the First World War. Strangest of all, a few Atlantic salmon, some from New Brunswick and others from northern Scotland, bravely migrated across the ocean to spend their summer vacations in southern Greenland, where their presence stirred up visions of European and American sportsmen following in their wake. Greenland froze 300 tons of them in 1962 and shipped them back to England and the United States; and the following year she increased the shipments to 400 tons. These Atlantic salmon linger on her coastal banks and avoid entering any of her short rivers except in the Godthåb and Holsteinsborg districts. However, in most rivers sportsmen can find another fine fish, the char or *Salmo alpinus*. This species the government attempted to exploit in 1914 within a deep fiord fed by several large streams, but it became alarmed at the rapidity with which the shoals diminished and abandoned the experiment after only three summers (Ad. S. Jensen, 1928, p. 346).

So the Greenlanders clung to their sea. From 1910 onward they rapidly expanded their fishing, aided by experts sent out from Denmark and, after 1927, by government loans to buy motor-boats.[1] Not only were the cod becoming more plentiful, but the world's demand for them was increasing, partly on account of the disruption of agriculture and the displacement of populations during the First World War. Between 1910 and 1925 Greenland's exports of cod rose from a few tons annually to 2,335 tons; at the same time her yearly exports of halibut, filleted and salted, fluctuated between 700 and 2,750 barrels, and her exports of shark liver averaged about 7,000 barrels. The tonnage of her exports doubled during those fifteen years, and their value rose even faster –from 579,000 kroner in 1910–11 to 2,100,000 kroner in 1925–6. Even when we allow for the steady growth of Greenland's population during the same period, for the changing value of the krone, and the rising prices of nearly all staple goods, this quadrupling in value of her exports still confirms what we know from other sources, namely, that the country, or at least west Greenland, was becoming more prosperous every year. Fishing stations were springing up all along the west coast, wooden row-boats, a few equipped with motors, were displacing both kayaks and umiaks,[2] and settlement after settlement, with its government warehouse and trading store alongside the landing-quay, its church, its school, its new European-type dwellings and the European clothing of its

[1]Cf. "Of late years the Greenland population has been interested in the purchase of motor boats, and since 1927 the Government has granted loans for that purpose. The arrangement is that the motor boats are sold to the Greenlanders at prices lower than the cost prices of the Administration. Only a small part of the purchase sum is paid in cash and the balance is granted by way of a loan free of interest. The loans are paid back by a certain percentage of the economic results attained. If in one year fishing has been good, relatively large instalments are paid, while in years with poorer results the instalments will be smaller." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 77).

[2]"More than any other single factor, it is the motor boat which has given impetus to the fisheries." (Therkilsen, 1961, p. 107).

inhabitants, came to resemble more and more a Scandinavian fishing village in Iceland or the Faroes.

The First World War, which lasted from 1914 to 1918, touched Greenland very lightly, because Denmark was able to preserve her neutrality throughout the struggle and safely send her ships across the ocean. After it ended, however, fishermen of many nations began to pursue the cod northward into Davis Strait, and both trawled and hand-lined them on the banks just outside Greenland's territorial waters, which were limited at that period to only three miles beyond her headlands. At the same time Norwegian vessels were fishing and hunting seals along the uncharted shores of northeast Greenland, claiming that it was a no-man's land not subject to the Danish crown. And in the far northwest Denmark's government was watching with anxious eyes the Thule district, fearful that some foreign power might suddenly claim possession of it on the ground of prior discovery, prior occupation, or analogous pretext.[1] In addition to these worries numerous complaints were reaching it, not from Greenland and Denmark alone, but from foreign powers, protesting against its quarantine of the colony and monopoly of its trade. The situation was serious.

Denmark acted quickly. In 1920 she appointed a commission consisting of both Danes and Greenlanders to investigate once more the troublesome question of the trade monopoly and the quarantine, and when the commission reported that the Greenlanders were not yet prepared for the freer economy the abolition of these restrictions would introduce, and recommended that both monopoly and quarantine be maintained for some time longer, she issued a proclamation declaring her sovereignty over the whole of Greenland and extending to its entire coastline the prohibition against foreign vessels entering its harbours or trespassing into its territorial waters. Thereafter she carefully included the Thule district in all official statistics and reports on Greenland, and insisted that no foreigner might set foot in that region without her permission. The dispute with Norway over her title to northeast Greenland she tried to settle by direct negotiation; when that method failed both countries referred the matter to the International Court of Justice in the Hague, which in 1933 issued a judgement in Denmark's favour. Then, with these vexing international issues well in hand, she concentrated her attention again on the economic and social problems of her colony, and the constitutional changes that would be necessary to place the Greenlanders on an equality with her European citizens. Already she had shown her willingness to share the tasks of government with them by appointing native-born Greenlanders to sit as full members on the 1920 commission. What now required careful consideration was the training the Greenlanders needed to qualify them for other tasks of similar nature.

[1]It remembered that in 1903 the Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup had claimed for his country Ellesmere Island, contiguous to the Thule district and for many centuries a hunting-ground of the Thule Eskimos. Canada immediately challenged Norway's claim by citing the so-called "sector principle" of arctic sovereignty, and by despatching a detachment of her Royal Northwest Mounted Police into the far north to uphold her rule. Neither had Denmark forgotten that in 1921, a party, led by a Canadian citizen and sponsored by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, had landed and hoisted the Canadian flag on Wrangell Island, two hundred miles north of Russia's Siberian coast. The Kap York district has been internationally recognized as Danish territory only since 1921 (Balle, 1929, p. 244).

Three problems within the colony itself demanded immediate attention. In West Greenland, where the fleets of foreign vessels frequenting the fishing banks outside the three-mile territorial limit were becoming larger year by year, she was under heavy pressure to exempt Danish fishermen from the quarantine, particularly the Faroe Islanders, who both needed new fishing-grounds and could usefully train the Greenlanders to handle larger vessels with nets and heavy equipment. The second problem was East Greenland, where the 30-year-old settlement at Angmagssalik faced a crisis because its rapidly growing population was outstripping the district's known resources; and the third lay in Holsteinsborg, half-way up Greenland's west coast, where the discovery of abundant halibut in the vicinity had given birth to a healthy fishery which needed subsidies to ensure its expansion.

This third problem, the Holsteinsborg fishery, seemed to present no difficulty. In 1924 the government built a cannery there, the first in Greenland; for halibut salted and dried like cod loses half its flavour and half its market value. In 1927 it instructed the Royal Greenland Trade to revive the settlement's whaling industry, dormant since the late nineteenth century; for Greenland needed the sea mammal's meat to supplement the inadequate supply of mutton from her sheep-farms. Finally, two or three years later, the administration planted there a small ship-building and ship-repair yard, also the first of its kind in Greenland. The whaling venture prospered: the meat was sold in Greenland at the very low price of 35 øre per kilogram (roughly U.S. 3½ cents a lb.), and the blubber shipped to Copenhagen for processing. From 1927 until the outbreak of the Second World War its annual catch averaged about thirty whales, and in the one year 1927–8 it provided, over and above a large quantity of meat, 305,000 kg. of blubber, which was still marketable, though at a reduced price.[1] The halibut industry, however, collapsed in the early 1930's, partly from biological causes, perhaps, but partly also through over-exploitation by foreign vessels on the nearby banks. Fortunately a shrimp bed had been discovered in the vicinity, and the government quickly converted its halibut cannery into a plant for processing shrimp.

More difficult was Denmark's problem in East Greenland. In the thirty years which had elapsed since 1894, when she had set up a trading post at Angmagssalik, the population of East Greenland had doubled until by 1924 it exceeded 700; and the new settlement at the trading post around which the natives concentrated would not have seemed out of place in the Disko Bugt region on the west coast. In addition to its store it could boast a church and a school, and on the drawing-board for future implementation was the plan of a small hospital to be staffed by a doctor or a fully trained nurse. Young and old wore clothing largely of European origin, and their frame houses resembled those of their western kin, of whom five or six families lived among them to help them transit, rapidly and painlessly, from the age of stone to the age of electricity. Every hunter now owned a rifle, and all, or nearly all, a kayak, while wooden row-boats were creeping in and replacing some of the umiaks. The younger generation could read and write, shamanism had disappeared or gone underground, and the whole population professed the Christian faith. In the space of one generation the former stone-age savages had travelled an amazingly long way.

[1]Ostermann, 1929a, p. 212; Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 27.

The human population had doubled, but not the fauna on which they depended for their livelihood. The seals and fish were certainly not more abundant than in earlier years; many hunters thought they were fewer, and although the full year's supply of provisions which the store carefully husbanded against an emergency had banished the danger of outright starvation in the vicinity of the settlement, one unfavourable season could still bring hunger and distress. If the settlement was to retain its prosperity some of its inhabitants would have to move away; and rather than move to the unfamiliar west coast, which was already well-peopled, they should migrate to some empty district on their own coast where both tradition and archaeology attested that their ancestors, armed with tools and weapons more primitive than those now available, had supported their families and brought up their children through uncounted years.

The situation came to a head just when several currents, previously divergent, united to produce a powerful stream that projected much of its force on Greenland. Illiteracy had largely disappeared from Europe and North America, and newspapers, journals, and travel magazines carried interesting news from every part of the globe to all classes of society in the western world. Humble citizens of many lands had marvelled at the hardihood and courage of the searchers for Sir John Franklin and his English crew who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, had disappeared without trace among the arctic islands to the north of Canada. A little later they thrilled with admiration at the journey of Norway's Fridtjof Nansen over the Greenland ice cap, and his daring drift in the *Fram* across the Polar Basin. The dogged attempts of the American Admiral Peary to reach the north pole won wide acclaim among many who had never heard of his earlier explorations in the northwest corner of Greenland. Denmark herself could point with pride to her own roster of brave explorers, several of them still living and working in Greenland; one I have mentioned already, Greenland's native son Knud Rasmussen, who had just completed his successful expedition to Canada's Hudson Bay region and crowned it with a sled journey right across the top of the continent to the Bering Sea. These explorers had lectured to large audiences in many lands, and written books and articles that reached a still larger public. Places that are remote commonly surround themselves with an aura of enchantment, as our tourist agencies know too well. It is not surprising, therefore, that from the mid-nineteenth century until well into the twentieth accounts of adventure among Greenland's icy mountains found as many avid readers as tales of derring-do among the slave raiders of East Africa.

Many of the explorers were scientists, for man's knowledge of nature and her workings had grown enormously since the middle of the nineteenth century, and some of her mysteries could not be solved without researches in Greenland. Geologists and physicists had been studying not only the orebodies in the colony but its ice cap, seeking clues to its origin and mass, its effect on the weather of western Europe, whether it was expanding or shrinking, and, if the latter, what would happen if it gradually melted away, as had other ice caps (e.g. the Labrador ice cap) since the earth's last glacial period began to wane 50,000 years ago. If it melted completely, they calculated, ocean levels would rise so many feet that they would drown out London, New York, and other great seaports—assuming of course, that man survived and was building

seaports in that hypothetical future. Biologists, again, had been observing the ocean currents around Greenland's shores and the movements of the icebergs that calve from her glaciers, hoping to determine their influence on the fish population of the North Atlantic, a matter vitally important to several countries that look to the sea for a considerable percentage of their food. And meteorologists, armed with new theories concerning the circulation of the atmosphere in the northern hemisphere, and the shaping of weather on the earth's surface by jostling air masses of "high" and "low" pressure, were depending on East Greenland to warn them of approaching weather changes which they could pass on to European farmers and sea-captains, and now also to the airmen who were beginning to plan transcontinental and transoceanic flights. In 1923 Norway set up a permanent weather station on the coast of East Greenland, and three years later Denmark built four others equipped with radio, the first of a chain which today stretches from Nord around latitude 82°N. to Prins Christian Sund in latitude 60°, a little north of Kap Farvel. Seven of them are hyper-modern stations erected since the Second World War: staffed by 15 or more men, they transmit meteorological data at regular intervals throughout both day and night (Mikkelsen, 1961, p. 133).

In Denmark itself another current flowed strongly among influential elements in the population, a feeling of pride at the success with which they were fulfilling a "colonial" task which their country had made peculiarly its own. Greenland had become a training-ground for many of Denmark's young and ambitious scientists, a pathway to advancement in their various careers; and they had been investigating every square mile of its land surface that nature exposed. Year after year since 1878, in the scholarly volumes of *Meddelelser om Grønland* ("Reports on Greenland"), they had given the world detailed accounts of its climate and physical features, its animal and plant life, the history and pre-history of its inhabitants and their customs and religious beliefs in the days of Hans Egede. The "Reports", published in Copenhagen, enjoyed a worldwide circulation, and many of its papers, even whole volumes, had been published in foreign tongues. Other Danish writers, notably Rink, had published popular books on Greenland which had also found translators and interested readers in foreign lands. And now Denmark's wards, the Greenlanders themselves, were approaching maturity and beginning to find their own way into the world of literature and art. Knud Rasmussen, Greenland's famous explorer and ethnographer, was not unique, not her one and only son. Others were coming to the fore, novelists and painters, educationalists, technicians and administrators, as yet a mere handful but the forerunners of more to come. And it was Denmark, one of the world's small nations, which had accomplished this, unaided by any other power. So in those critical days around 1924 a large and in part extremely well-informed public in Denmark took note of everything that occurred in Greenland, and viewed with sympathy the government's efforts to give it a viable economy and a progressive social and cultural life. Their number included many women. Indeed, it was a charitable organization largely composed of women, The "Society for the Help of Greenland Children",[1] which in 1925 initiated the building at Sukkertoppen

[1]Another Danish society, the Red Barnet or Save the Children Society, today operates and partly finances, in collaboration with the Danish Red Cross, a chain of kindergartens along Greenland's west coast, each supervised by two trained Danish teachers assisted by one or several Greenland women. They train little children between the ages of 2½ and 6½ years.

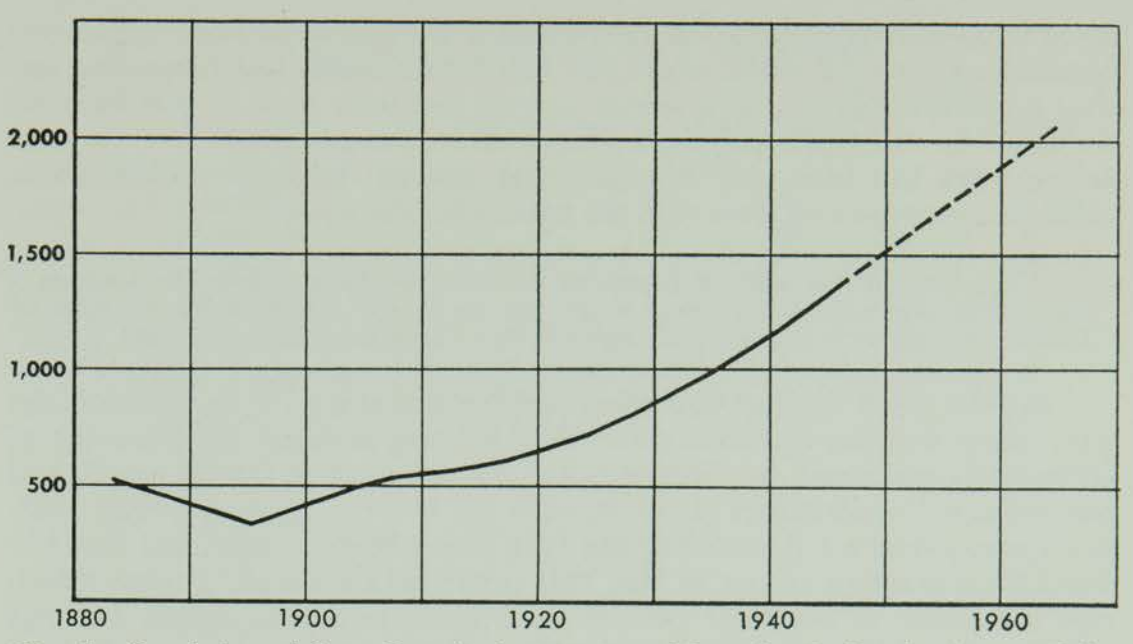

Fig. 5. Population of East Greenland, 1884–1964. Note the decline in the population between 1884 and 1895 (see pp. 59–62) and the steady rise since Denmark established a settlement at Angmagssalik closely linked with the outside world. The graph has been constructed on figures taken from Mikkelsen, 1961, p. 118, 'Statistiske oplysninger om Grønland', 1942–7, p. 594, and Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 3.

of a sanatorium with 20 beds, and thereafter defrayed all the costs of running it with a Danish nurse, under the supervision of the district's medical officer. About this time, too, a group of Denmark's leading scholars, under the auspices of her Commission for the Direction of the Geological and Geographical Investigations of Greenland, was compiling two very large and well documented works on the island's physical features, its geology, history, and people. The first work, a two-volume publication in Danish issued in 1921, described the physical features and the geology of each district in detail; the second, a three-volume work in English published from 1928–9, covered the island's ethnography, trade, and kindred subjects.

It was a private committee of such people, the Scoresby Sund Committee, which in 1924 took the initiative in solving the East Greenland crisis. One of its members, Ejnar Mikkelsen, had carried out extensive explorations along the northern part of the east coast, and was acquainted also with arctic Alaska, where he and an American geologist, Ernest de K. Leffingwell, had run a line of soundings across a section of the continental shelf north of Flaxman Island. Mikkelsen advised the establishment of an East Greenland colony in Scoresby Sund, an extensive fiord region about 600 miles north of Angmagssalik which should provide good sealing, judging from his own observations and from the numerous ruins of earlier habitations around its shores. The committee accepted his advice, and, collecting funds from all over Denmark, prepared a suitable site near the entrance of the sound and handed it over to the government, which then authorized Mikkelsen to transfer to it 82 persons in 1925, nearly all of them from Angmagssalik. Seals proved to be very abundant, polar bears unusually numerous, and the settlement flourished until in 1958 it contained 353 persons, and was capable of supporting still more. The emigration eased the strain on Angmagssalik, but for a few years only. The inhabitants of that place continued to increase so rapidly that in 1938 the government

hived off another group of about 150 persons to the district of Skjoldungen two hundred miles to the south, which the East Greenlanders had frequented less than a century before. This second colony also took root, so that by 1961 the east coast was supporting three prosperous settlements where seventy years before there had been only one, and that one on the verge of extinction. Mikkelsen expressed no more than the truth when he wrote:

> "This humanitarian work of improving the living standards of East Greenlanders is the contribution which must surely weigh heaviest in any assessment of the value of Danish colonization or of Denmark's rights in East Greenland (Mikkelsen, 1961, p. 131).

In 1924, when the East Greenland problem was absorbing its attention, the government temporarily staved off its third pressing problem, the relaxation of Greenland's quarantine, by throwing open the east coast to Danish vessels, and partly also to Danish settlers (Lindow, 1929, pp. 36–7). Then on 1 April 1925, parliament passed a bill amending the 1776 Royal Statute which had first laid down the quarantine, and on 30 May 1927 permitted Danish and Faroese fishermen to operate in the outer part of Greenland's territorial waters, but not inshore. In tabling the 1925 bill the government emphasized, as it had on several previous occasions,

> "that the closing of the country and the monopoly were only measures carried out with the view to form a basis for the cultural development, and that the Danish regulations of conditions should not last longer than until it was realized that the population of Greenland was sufficiently mature to decide about its own future and its own affairs." (Sveistrup, 1949, pp. 195–6).

In 1927 it offered another concession. It granted the Danish and Faroese fishermen a special base at Færingehavn; and in 1939, it opened to the Faroese two other ports. These arrangements held good until May 1950, when a new act reserved all commercial fishing and hunting activities in Greenland, and in Greenland territorial waters, to Danish subjects permanently resident in Greenland (nearly all of whom, of course, were Greenlanders by birth), and to other Danish subjects who had received special permission from the Danish Prime Minister. This last clause aimed to benefit especially the Faroe Islanders, who could henceforth fish, under permit, anywhere in Greenland waters, and not, as previously, only in their outer parts (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1951, p. 82).

The navigation act of 1 April 1925 was but one of several enacted by Denmark at this time to reorganize and modernize the structure of her Greenland administration. Another bill, passed in 1924, divided Greenland for commercial purposes into fifteen districts, each containing a main trading station which gave the district its name, and from two to eight dependent outposts. In South Greenland there were five main stations supplying, in 1927, about 8,000 people, in North Greenland seven to meet the needs of about 6,500. East Greenland was assigned two trading posts, one at Angmagssalik to serve a population of about 700 (1927), the other in Scoresby Sund to serve about 100. Finally, there was the Thule or Kap York district with its 280 "Polar Eskimos", where the trading and mission station founded by Knud Rasmussen was still carrying on under private management.

Table 7. Trading districts in 1927. (Combined from Lindow, 1929, p. 30, and Appendix II in 'Greenland', vol. 3, 1929, p. 404).

Main station	*No. of outposts*	*Population*	
		Greenlanders	*Europeans*
SOUTH GREENLAND			
Julianehåb	8	3518	26
Frederikshåb	3	981	5
Godthåb	4	1276	37
Sukkertoppen	3	1363	17
Holsteinsborg	3	876	7
NORTH GREENLAND			
Egedesminde	6	1646	14
Christianshåb	3	599	2
Jakobshavn	2	653	19
Ritenbenk	3	679	8
Godhavn	3	400	21
Umanak	8	1406	19
Upernavik	8	1152	16
EAST GREENLAND			
Angmagssalik	—	696	9
Scoresbysund	—	105	4
KAP YORK DISTRICT			
Thule	—	284	—

"The cargoes from Denmark are unloaded at the trading stations of the districts, and the necessary articles are forwarded to the outposts, from where, in their turn, the native products are transported to the chief trading stations and thence to Denmark. At every chief trading station there is a Danish official, the 'Kolonibestyrer', who as a rule has one or more Danish assistants; at the outposts, the trader is most frequently a native. Whereas trading at the outposts is done in rather a primitive fashion and is managed by the trader without any assistance, the number of hands required at the chief trading stations is rather considerable, a high percentage of the Greenlanders being employed as artisans, while during the summer season particularly day-labourers are used to a very large extent for loading and unloading, as crews of vessels, for building, etc. Consequently, at all the chief trading posts a proletariate class has come into existence, consisting of people who are not employed at productive work, but who live from hand to mouth by means of odd jobs and who are rarely able to earn their living all the year round." (Lindow, 1929, p. 31).[1]

[1]Time laughs at our transitory definitions and nomenclatures, which are constantly changing to conform with changes in communications and in size and distribution of populations. Only thirty-five years after this was written we read in another official publication:

"Greenland has about 28,000 inhabitants. They live in townships, villages and hamlets, known as 'colonies', 'trading centres' and 'settlements' respectively. About 13,000 live in colonies, the biggest of which, Godthaab, has 2,500 inhabitants; the smallest colony, Scoresby in East Greenland, has only 166 inhabitants.

"7,000 people live in 53 trading centres, ranging from 40 to 300 inhabitants. Finally, there are 106 settlements with a total of 5,000 inhabitants. These population centres number between 200 and as few as 3–5 people.

"This division into three forms of population is based on the fact that colonies are visited by supply and passenger ships from the outside world and have administrative and social institutions. Trading centres have a few institutions such as a church, a school and a store; they are generally the seat of certain municipal undertakings; supplies are received from and products freighted to the colonies. Settlements have no institutions, apart from a more or less well-developed education system; the inhabitants generally have to fetch their necessaries from and take their profit-yielding products to a trading centre or colony." (Borum, 1961, p. 93).

By 1927, it is clear, Greenland's once monolithic society of primitive seal-hunters had changed both in numbers and in form. Its population had doubled since the beginning of Danish colonization, and a dozen or more of its communities were larger than any that had existed in pre-European times. In these larger communities, and in some that were less large, the monolithic structure had split apart and given place to a class system based, not on wealth or social standing, but on occupation. Thus in North Greenland, where most heads of families still hunted seals and, on occasion, white whales for their livelihood, and fished for sharks and halibut, a few were now alternating summer sealing and fishing with winter coal-mining, while others in two or three favourable localities relied on fishing first and hunted seals only when fishing was impossible or unprofitable. A significant percentage had become government employees: they worked for the trading company, either on a main station or in one of the outposts; or they were employed by the church as lay preachers or school-teachers; or by the administrative or the medical service, the last of which employed an increasing number of midwives. Finally, a certain percentage, which varied from one community to another, had lapsed into what Lindow calls a proletariat class—men who picked up temporary jobs such as carpentering and stevedoring, fished or sealed at odd times during the summer, perhaps, and in winter spent their days in idleness, or in fashioning curios, while relying on the community's relief chest to keep themselves and their families from outright starvation. South Greenland gave fishing the priority over sealing, and in its southernmost fiords offered a new occupation, sheep-farming, as a substitute for both; and to the three classes in the north, sealers and fishermen, government employees, and day-workers, it was adding a fourth group of industrial workers —those in the Holsteinsborg shipyard, for example, and some men, but mainly women, in the canneries which were springing up along the coast. These wage-earning women, together with the salaried midwives and the still rare female clerks and school-teachers, introduced an entirely new element into Greenland society, the independent woman who gained her own livelihood, could live, if she preferred (she seldom did) in a home of her own, and could marry the man of her choice. Thus in place of their old classless society the Greenlanders were now grouping themselves into three main groups: first, the producers, i.e. the seal-hunters, the fishermen, and the sheep-farmers, all men; second, the service people, both men and women, all civil servants of one kind or another in this land where the government controlled all trade; and, third, the day-labourers, mostly men, and the factory workers, the majority of whom were women.

It was Rink who first saw, back in the middle of the nineteenth century, that great changes were impending, and who took the first political step to prepare the Greenlanders for them. He set up his Boards of Guardians for the express purpose of training the leading men in each community to handle the finances it derived from the 20 per cent levy on exports, and to settle by democratic methods similar to those in Denmark the various problems that were sure to arise from one day to the next. At the same time he designed the distribution of the year's financial surplus—the "repartition", as it was called—in order to supply the producers of each community, the seal-hunters, with a little capital for improving their homes and purchasing better equipment. In both

aims he succeeded, though not as fully as he would have wished. What counted most, however, was that he firmly planted the Greenlanders' feet on the upward path politically, and rendered any reversal of the movement well-nigh impossible.[1]

The next move in the Greenlanders' political education came with the Church and School Act of 1905, which raised the Lutheran mission to a status resembling that of Denmark's National Church and gave its clergy, now predominantly Greenlandic, a large if not decisive voice in its management, and with that management, the administration of the educational system that had hitherto been in effect. During the period that is covered by this chapter, the thirty-four years from 1905 to the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, these constitutional seedlings planted first by Rink, then by the Church and School Act, sprouted and produced buds that were ready to blossom when the war ended. And protecting them with its sturdy strength, if we may continue the metaphor, stood the new economic tree which had developed out of the abundant fish that now made their home in Greenland waters.

In 1905, however, the seedlings were still awaiting the fertile rain that would stimulate their sprouting. This was one of Mylius-Erichsen's complaints, that the administration was keeping the rain away, that it was deliberately holding the Greenlanders back instead of preparing them for the new and prosperous era that was visible just ahead. It was time to separate Greenland's administration from its trade, he said, to abolish the quarantine and let the island's inhabitants learn from actual trafficking with foreign nations the mechanics and vicissitudes of international trade.

The government, nevertheless, continued to hold them back, not from indifference but from over-caution, like a mother-hen trying to keep its ducklings from the water. It resorted to that time-honoured expedient of all governments: it appointed a commission to study and report on the matter. The commission, whose eight members included five commercial experts, roundly criticized the Royal Greenland Trade for protecting itself from heavy losses on the goods it sold in Greenland by paying absurdly low prices for the products of the country; it violated all sound commercial principles, they declared, to victimize in this way the producers, the seal-hunters and the fishermen, just because the colony possessed so few resources that its population was unable to pay world prices for the necessities it was obliged to import. The government was jeopardizing the Greenlanders' progress by keeping them aloof from the world of commerce, unable to learn its treacherous currents and eddies and to steer through them in safety.

One, and one only, of this commission's recommendations did the government accept. It refused to lift the quarantine on the ground that the Greenlanders still needed its protection; but on 27 May 1908 it passed a bill to divorce

[1]Cf. "The repartition [an institution peculiar to Greenland] was introduced with the first regulations on the boards of guardians, and the object was to further the forming of real capital in the Greenland community. Before the introduction of the repartition the breadwinner had never, at any season, had any fairly large amount at his disposal for the purchase of articles of real capital, such as various implements and building materials, and the intention was that once every year he should receive such an amount, so as to be able to undertake economic long-run dispositions. The repartition is of less importance nowadays [1947] when saving banks have been introduced" (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 200). In 1946 the majority of the municipalities in South Greenland, and many of those in North Greenland, voted for its abolition.

the colony's trade from its administration and to increase the participation of Greenlanders in the government of their island by giving them greater control of their local affairs.[1]

The bill commonly bears the name of the Administration and Trade Act of 1908. It placed in the hands of the Minister of the Interior jurisdiction over all Greenland's affairs except the church and education, which remained as before under the Ministry of Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs. For administrative convenience it separated West Greenland into two provinces, a northern and a southern, divided each province into districts, the southern into 11 and the northern into 12, and subdivided each district into municipalities, of which there were 26 in South Greenland and 36 in North Greenland (see Table 12, p. 117). To meet the frequently expressed criticism that the welfare of the Greenlanders was being too often sacrificed to the interests of trade, it set up, under the Ministry of the Interior, not one but two directors, ostensibly coordinate and both to reside in Copenhagen, but one to be charged with the administration of the colony and the other with all commercial matters, including of course the management of the Royal Greenland Trade. In Greenland there were to be two coordinate inspectors, one ruling the northern province and the other the southern, each reporting independently to the two directors in Copenhagen.

Such was the government's new scheme for divorcing Greenland's administration from its trade; but no sooner had it received the sanction of parliament than it revealed its impracticability. Officialdom did indeed attempt to give effect to it, but became so bogged down in petty, and not so petty, disagreements that the government annulled the divorce in 1912 and reunited the two functions of trade and administration under a single director. The 1912 act also subjected the Greenland church and Greenland education to the same director, who thenceforth reported to two Ministers of the Crown, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs. On this one official, and on him alone (subject of course to his Ministers' approval) now rested the responsibility of resolving all conflicts between trade and welfare, and of reconciling the needs of education with the requirements of the church.

Other provisions of the Administration and Trade Act of 1908 were more durable than the two directorships it set up. They abolished Rink's Boards of Guardians, but substituted in their place Municipal Councils, composed exclusively of Greenlanders, to perform most of their functions, namely, to maintain public order in the little settlements, to settle such civil disputes as inheritances provided they did not involve Danes, and to relieve the local poor with the municipality's share of the 20 per cent tax paid by the Royal Greenland Trade on its exports of Greenland's products, now supplemented by the new act with a 2 per cent tax on the salaries of all Greenlanders and Danes in the

[1]If in this section, and elsewhere, I seem to overload the story of Greenland's internal administration with needless and perhaps confusing detail, the reader will remember that these details unveil the slow and sometimes hesitant steps whereby in little more than two centuries Denmark led the descendants of a primitive race of savages out of the darkness of their arctic night, converted them into prosperous fisher-folk, and trained them to govern their own land with efficiency and to participate in world affairs as respected citizens of the Danish kingdom. Neither Canada nor the United States has achieved comparable success with their Eskimos.

government employ. The Municipal Councils met once a month throughout the winter, and at one of their sessions elected representatives to the Provincial Council, a purely advisory body which met only once a year, under the presidency of the local Danish inspector, to inform him of conditions in his province and suggest such changes as it deemed advisable. The act made no provision for any joint session of the two Provincial Councils, or even for mutual consultation. Each was as independent of the other as the two inspectors, any coordination of whose policies required the sanction of the administrative director in Copenhagen.

In addition to Municipal and Provincial councils, the 1908 act established two mixed courts, one in South and one in North Greenland, to deal with serious offences and to settle all civil cases in which the defendant, but not the plaintiff, was a Greenlander. Two members of each court were to be Greenlanders appointed by the Municipal Councils, two of them Danes appointed by the inspector of the province, and the fifth member, the president of the court, the inspector himself, or some one deputed by him to fill his place.

In this manner Denmark attempted to refute the charges that she was deliberately maintaining the Greenlanders in a state of tutelage. By giving the municipalities a very large measure of autonomy and making Danes ineligible to sit in their councils she threw the full responsibility for municipal affairs on the Greenlanders themselves, and in backward even more than in advanced societies, small municipalities provide the best training-ground for service in larger political units. The Provincial Councils which Denmark superimposed on the Municipal ones opened up this larger field, even though they possessed no executive powers, because they familiarized their members with the most important issues facing the entire country; and the mixed courts, composed of representatives of the two races equal in standing, taught the Greenlanders European conceptions of law and justice, the while it protected them from the arbitrary whims of members of the ruling race.

Many months elapsed before the government could put into effect all the provisions of the 1908 act, and it was not until 1911 that Rink's Boards of Guardians officially ceased to exist. They had fulfilled at least one—the principal one—of the tasks which Rink had hoped they would accomplish: they had trained many Greenlanders to play a more active role in the administration of their country. The government did not really abolish the Boards, but only changed their name and modified their form to fit them for a larger role which would carry the tiny communities they served farther along the road to eventual self-government.

During the First World War, and for a few years afterwards, Denmark abstained from further experiments with Greenland's constitution, although the decline of sealing on the west coast and the swift rise of the fishing industry were producing in its structure a few cracks, as yet not deep enough to threaten its stability. One crack resulted from the prohibition against Danish nationals sitting on the Municipal and Provincial councils, however long they had resided in Greenland; for this not only deprived the country of the advice of some of its best-informed and most experienced men, but it kept open the rift between Danes and Greenlanders which other institutions, e.g. the church and the mixed law-courts, were attempting in their own ways to close. A second crack sprang from the revolution in Greenland's economic base, which

was drawing the people away from the old sealing localities into places more favourable for fishing, so that the 62 municipalities established by the 1908 Administration and Trade Act were becoming less and less representative of the true distribution of the population. Far more serious than these surface cracks, however, was the painfully slow progress of the Greenlanders in preparing themselves for absorption into a fast encroaching and swiftly moving world which spares little mercy for laggards who fail to keep pace with it. This had been the essence of Mylius-Erichsen's criticisms in the first decade of the century, criticisms that Knud Rasmussen repeated and supported after his return in 1923 from his epic journey across arctic America. During the concluding weeks of that journey he had been strongly impressed by the sophistication of the Alaskan Eskimos, by their knowledge, albeit very imperfect still, of the English language, and by their seeming readiness to become full and active citizens of the United States. Greenland's educational system, he declared, should be thoroughly overhauled, because there was no future for its people until they acquired a fluent knowledge of some world language, in their case of course Danish.

The growing chorus of criticisms galvanized the government into action. On 18 April 1925 it enacted a bill: the Act on the Administration of Greenland, which, supplemented by some Orders in Council a year later, fixed for the next twenty-five years the pattern of the colony's administration. It preserved the general constitution as laid down by the Administration and Trade Acts of 1908 and 1912; and it retained the division of West Greenland into two provinces, North Greenland and South Greenland, each with an advisory Provincial Council which met yearly under the presidency of the province's governor (*landsfoged*) and helped him formulate new measures. It retained also the organization of North and South Greenland into municipalities, each with its own elected council to handle local affairs; but it raised the number of municipalities in the two provinces to 76 and grouped them into 13 districts, each of which operated through a council composed of the chairmen of all the district's Municipal Councils, all its members in the Provincial Council, and all the Danish officials holding appointments in the district (see Table 12, p. 117).

Eligible to vote for a Municipal Council were all residents of that municipality over 22 years of age who had never received relief, or been tried in a law-court for any offence and convicted; but to be eligible for a seat in the council a man must also have been born in Greenland and exceed 25 years of age, or, if a Dane, be a civil servant or person equal in status to a civil servant. The last clause rectified one of the weaknesses of the 1908 act, which had denied Danes the right to vote or to stand for membership. Ironically, the change made the new Municipal Councils almost identical with the old Boards of Guardians which they had ostensibly replaced.

The functions of the Municipal Councils remained the same as before: they maintained order in their communities, settled civil disputes, and furnished relief to those in need. Because those needs had grown with the increasing size of the communities the act charged them with two new duties, namely, arranging vocational training for the young and aiding both the sick and the needy. This last duty clearly conflicted with the functions which the same

1925 act imposed on the District Councils, namely, to provide pensions for the blind, the deaf and dumb, the permanently crippled and the mentally ill, and, in addition, to help other Greenlanders in need; however, the District Councils avoided any friction by donating only food, clothing, and, for individuals ineligible for building loans, tools and materials for improving their homes. After 1926, when Denmark passed an act granting pensions to all Greenlanders over 55 years of age who could not provide for themselves and their families, it was the District Councils which paid them; in this instance, however, they drew the necessary funds, not from their share of the 20 per cent export tax, but directly from the government, which provided for them in its budget. Actually, Denmark was applying to Greenland a principle which she herself had adopted, and which is very widely accepted today, namely, that direct relief, as far as is humanly possible, should be kept to a minimum, but that the poor and the needy should receive every possible assistance that will help them to help themselves. It was in compliance with this principle that the District Councils made grants of clothing materials rather than of garments, and gave fatherless boys ready to strike out for themselves not money, but the "tools of their trade", i.e. kayaks, seal-hunting equipment, and fishing tackle. The table below shows how its adoption kept Greenland's expenses for "poor relief" fairly constant during the first twenty years, allowing for the increase of population during that period, whereas her expenses for "support", i.e. indirect relief that avoids, or seeks to avoid, the evils of direct relief, almost doubled.

Table 8. Social expenditure in West Greenland (in kroner).[1]
(From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 26).

	1927–8	*1937–8*	*1946–7*	*1947–8*
Municipal funds				
Poor relief	1,505	2,288	1,928	1,730
Support	6,024	11,521	11,592	13,114
District funds				
Invalidity relief	2,918	11,523	18,819	23,992
Extraordinary Old-Age Pensions	—	1,353	8,654	2,019
Government funds				
Old-Age Pensions	46,803	58,608	75,791	138,401

Social support was a very important, but not the principal, task of the District Councils. They supervised the schools in their districts, took care of the cemeteries, and watched over the public health. The chairmen who presided over them, *sysselmænd* ("District Managers") as they were called, might be either Danes or Greenlanders. They were not elected, but appointed by the governors of their provinces and approved by the Minister in Copenhagen.

Very different in character from the District Councils were the two Provincial Councils, whose members, elected for six years by both District and Municipal councils, provided the principal link between the Greenlanders and the Danish government.

The governor of each province presided *ex officio* as the chairman of his province's Council. He submitted various measures for its consideration and

[1]Note the big increase in Invalidity and Old-Age Pensions in 1947–8 which probably resulted from a recount of the population after the Second World War. In 1938 the krone was at par with the English shilling, i.e. 4 Kr. = $1 U.S.

advice, and received resolutions which the Council itself drew up and presented for his examination. Neither its advice nor its resolutions were mandatory, although both the governor and his ministry in Copenhagen seem to have studied them earnestly. When the Provincial Councils were not in session each governor decided all urgent questions himself.

The organization just outlined affected West Greenland only, for Copenhagen had decided that the interests of the 700 or 800 inhabitants of East Greenland could best be served by an inspector. Not until 1946 was that side of the island given two councils, one at Angmagssalik and the other in Scoresby Sund, to crystallize and transmit to the government the opinions and wishes of their people. "Hunters' Councils", they were called, the name which the Administration Act had given to a similar council it set up in the Kap York district, whose population was so small, so primitive still, and so isolated, that only one Danish official, or quasi-official, lived among them, to manage the trading post established there by Knud Rasmussen.

There can be little doubt that the Administration Act of 1925 carried the Greenlanders a long step forward on the road to autonomy. It placed local self-government in their hands more firmly than ever before and, under the guise of Provincial Councils, set up two representative bodies which, without possessing any legal powers, considerably influenced the Danish government, gained useful training in the colony's affairs, and could easily be united, if Denmark so wished, into a parliament for the entire island, clothed with whatever authority she chose to confer on it. The act also struck a blow at racial superiority and inferiority complexes by giving Greenlanders the preference in government employment provided their qualifications measured up to those of Danes; for this regulation, honestly carried out (as apparently it was), placed a premium on education and opened up many desirable careers to youths who were willing to train for them. Finally, its insistence that Greenlanders should receive more and better education, that the schools should teach Danish as a second language but that Eskimo should remain the medium of instruction and the country's official tongue, gave the people an unwritten assurance that Denmark would not cease to honour her trusteeship, but would continue to promote their advancement, economically and socially, without any thought of profit for herself.

Such, indeed, would be the judgement of an outsider. Nevertheless, public opinion remained divided both in Greenland and in Denmark. Some wholeheartedly praised the new act, others roundly condemned it as over-cautious and evasive. The latter declared that it was deliberately applying a brake to Greenland's steady evolution and speedy emancipation, that after two hundred years of Danish trusteeship it was holding the inhabitants to the same inferior level as had first necessitated Denmark's overlordship to protect them from an unfriendly world. What was the advantage, they asked, of forever adjusting and readjusting the present artificial structure of their hothouse society when the hothouse itself could certainly not withstand much longer the increasing assaults upon it from both the homeland and abroad. Would it not be wiser to dismantle it carefully before it came crashing down in ruins, gradually to relax the quarantine and the trade monopoly by permitting the entry of friendly Danish enterprise, to make Danish the official language of the country, slowly relegating Eskimo to second place, and to familiarize the Greenlanders

with Danish commercial practices and Danish political and social structures, before the world's tumultuous peoples rudely tore away all political barriers and allowed one nation after another to invade Greenland's shores?

In Denmark so widely spread was this feeling that in 1927 a number of the government's critics banded together to found the "New Greenland" (Det Ny Grønland) society, which aimed through public meetings and the distribution of pamphlets to rouse the country into demanding a "newer, freer and better Greenland". Its motto read "Free access to Greenland for Danish citizens, for Danish enterprise and fisheries, the abolition of the monopoly and the system of the closed country"; and although its membership remained small, it kept alive the interest of the public until the Second World War overtook the nation and engulfed the organization in its whirlpool (Sveistrup, 1949, pp. 87–8).

The 1925 Administration left education in the hands of the church, which in Greenland worked very closely with the governors of the two provinces; and Denmark increased the church's budget to cover the expansion in schooling necessitated by the growth of the population and its increasing tendency to gather into larger settlements. How the church divided its budget is not clear, since it never separated its expenses for the churches from those for the schools; but there can be no doubt that it allotted far the larger share of its funds to the schools.[1] There were few Danish teachers on its rolls, and most of those taught in the Godthåb high school and seminary; but the seminary trained its catechists for educational as well as ecclesiastical duties, and these junior clergy continued to perform both tasks, save for the occasional individual who sought and obtained release from his church duties in order that he might devote all his time to teaching. The head clergyman of each district, whether Dane or Greenlander, supervised the primary schools of his district, assisted by a school board of three men which the District Council appointed from its own members. This board did good service as a mouthpiece for the children's parents, who could bring to it their complaints.

Schooling was now compulsory six days in the week (classes were held on Saturdays) for all children between the ages of seven and fourteen; and the school year was fixed at about 200 days, a total so seldom reached in the small settlements, where the population was still rather mobile, that the average year hardly amounted to 170 days. Greenlandic continued to be the language of instruction in all the primary schools (except in the Danish class, if there was one, for the subjects taught depended to some extent on the qualifications of the teachers), also in many classes at the Godthåb high school, where, however, the limitations of the Eskimo tongue made it necessary to use Danish for teaching mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Inability to speak and understand Danish disqualified nearly all children who graduated from the primary schools from proceeding any farther with their education, except along the lines of vocational and technical training.

Both Danish officials and Greenlanders were now whole-heartedly supporting the educational system. Nevertheless, for many years it lagged, partly

[1]"It is impossible to separate school expenditure from the total budget for schools and churches, but it may be stated that church costs are relatively limited, and that the considerable increases of recent years are preponderantly due to educational developments . . . .

"In 1923–4 Greenland had 2,917 school children, so that the cost per child amounted to Kr. 96.98. In 1947–8 there were 4,214 school children in Greenland and the cost has thus increased to Kr. 333.59 per child." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, pp. 33 and 35).

perhaps because of the priority given to the construction of additional primary schools, partly on account of the economic depression in the 1930's, which led to serious shortages of building and other materials. The high school at Godthåb, which had registered 35 students in 1910, registered only 36 in 1938, and no other post-primary school opened its doors before the Second World War except one for training junior teachers. A few settlements organized evening classes for both adults and young people, but restricted them, as a rule, to subjects of "general education". A new and larger Home for Greenlanders in Copenhagen took the place of the one which Rink had founded, and his old scheme for training Greenlanders in Denmark received new life and operated with considerable success. From 1874 to 1891 only 31 young people had been trained under its auspices in the mother country; but in the second half of the 1930's an average of 20 were training there each year; and from 1900 to 1940, when the war cut off all direct contact between Denmark and her colony for six years, 166 Greenland men and 31 Greenland women were trained in Europe,[1] while numerous other women learned housekeeping in Greenland in the homes of Danish officials.

[1]All 31 women were midwives who presumably spent their third year of training in Copenhagen's Maternity Hospital. Of the 166 men 47 became sailors, 17 carpenters, 21 smiths, and 33 teachers; the remaining 48 trained for miscellaneous trades ('Statistiske oplysninger om Grønland', 1942–7, pp. 541–2).

CHAPTER 5

The Second World War and the Five-Year Plan: 1939–48

The three Scandinavian countries, having ridden out the First World War in peaceful neutrality, expected to ride out the Second in the same manner. Germany's sudden invasion of Denmark and Norway, therefore, caught the Greenland officials wholly unprepared. On the day Hitler's troops rolled northward and entered Copenhagen, the governor of its southern province was travelling in the United States, where his country's ambassador, Henrik Kauffmann, flatly refused to obey the orders which the enemy's occupation authorities radioed to him from Denmark, or to recognize in any way the jurisdiction of his country's invaders. The governor of Greenland's northern province, Eske Brun, adopted the same independent policy: in the absence of his colleague he took over the administration of the entire island, and obeyed only those instructions from Copenhagen which he judged in the best interests of the colony and its motherland. Before taking any important decisions, however, he consulted the leading Danes in his neighbourhood, and also Greenland's two Provincial Councils. Both supported him whole-heartedly, and the two Councils set up a joint committee to facilitate consultation.

All direct contact with Denmark had ceased, but through Kauffmann in New York Brun was able to obtain financial credits for his government and new markets for Greenland's two main products, cryolite and cod. The Aluminum Company of Canada contracted for all the cryolite that had previously gone to Europe, and the United States shared most of the cod with Portugal, which, being neutral, could safely send its ships across the Atlantic to freight the fish to its destination. War shortages soon raised the prices of both the cryolite and the cod, and with large sales and credits in New York Brun readily purchased in America the supplies that Greenland had previously imported from Denmark. Accordingly the island prospered. As a contribution to the allied cause Kauffmann signed an agreement permitting the United States to build, free of rent, a number of airfields and radar stations along its coast; but he and Brun carefully prevented these military installations from disturbing the tranquillity in the rest of the country except the far northwest, where an airfield long planned but not constructed until the war's end, and then five years later expanded into a mighty airbase, so disrupted the local game supply that the Greenland administration moved the "Polar Eskimos" to a nearly virgin hunting district seventy miles to the north. Only on the northeast coast did the war cast a small but sinister shadow. There Germany tried to establish weather stations to support her air operations and submarine raids against allied shipping in the North Atlantic; but Brun organized a Danish land patrol to keep watch on their activities, and the allies' air and sea forces quickly put out

of action the four or five weather stations which the enemy did succeed in setting up.

The direct flames of the war, then, did not touch the Greenlanders, but approached near enough to warn them that their country could no longer hold itself entirely aloof from the great world beyond its shores. Even before the capture of Berlin extinguished the conflagration's last embers, commercial air lines were plotting to use Greenland's airbases and radar and weather stations to speed up traffic between Atlantic Europe and the two shores of the Pacific Ocean[1]; and more foreign fishing companies than ever before were scanning the waters off her coast for fish to feed the millions of destitute persons displaced by the global conflict. Greenland's barriers were being torn down. Since the beginning of the century her primitive economy had metamorphosed itself into an economy built on money, and now her people felt ready to link their fortunes with those of the commercial nations in Europe and America.

The war greatly widened, too, the political horizons of Greenland's inhabitants, so greatly, indeed, that after 5 May 1945, when Denmark became free again and could resume her control of the island, they quietly informed her, in discussions held during the first half of 1946 between a delegation from their two Provincial Councils, the permanent Danish Parliamentary Committee on Greenland, and representatives of the Greenland Board of Governors, that they had conducted their affairs very well during the world conflict, and were quite capable of administering the internal affairs of their country without direct supervision from Copenhagen. They did not wish to follow Iceland's path of a year earlier and completely sever their close ties with Denmark, for they knew that she had led them inside the portals of civilization and honestly striven to promote their welfare and progress; but they asked that they might become, "formally and effectively, an equal part of the Danish Realm" (Brun, 1961, p. 38). They needed Danish capital to build new homes, new schools, and new fishing vessels, and to maintain the efficient medical service she had set up, a service that had permitted their population to increase 20 per cent after the war cut off their connections with Europe. That war had brought to their doorsteps many American goods different from the Danish ones with which they had long been familiar, and it had strengthened their desire for the abolition, or at least relaxation, of the government's century-and-a-half-old trade monopoly and its restrictions[2]—a craving to spend the money they had earned during the prosperous war years, and were still earning, on a much greater variety of goods than the Royal Greenland Trade had hitherto provided in its stores.[3] If Denmark considered that they were not yet adequately prepared for the removal of the monopoly's umbrella they would willingly wait a little longer; but the delay would emphasize more

[1]As early as 1933 Pan American Airways had carried out surveys in Greenland, but it was not until 1952 that Scandinavian Airlines System inaugurated regular passenger flights across the Arctic between Europe and America, using the Thule airfield as a staging base.

[2]Throughout the war Christian Vibe, the editor of Godthåb's Danish newspaper *Grønlandsposten* (a fortnightly founded in 1941), had ceaselessly advocated the relaxation of the trade monopoly in favour of Danish citizens.

[3]For many years after the war ended nearly every vessel that left Copenhagen for West Greenland carried on its deck a cargo of motor-boats to relieve the shortage that had developed during the world conflict. Many Greenlanders were able to pay for them from their war-savings without borrowing from the government. By the summer of 1959 nearly 800 islanders owned motor-boats, mostly decked vessels about 24 feet long.

forcibly than ever their need of advanced education and technical training, and of greatly improved instruction in the Danish language which alone could unlock the door to this training. Finally, they wanted equality with the Danes who were living in their midst and holding all the higher positions in the government service. They resented being classed as a peculiar and in many respects an inferior people, exempt from the provisions of the Criminal Code that governed their Danish neighbours, but subject to a special code of case laws built up through the decades from purely Greenlandic court decisions.

The war had caused some re-thinking in Denmark also.[1] Distances had shrunk with the advent of the radio and the aeroplane, and a government official could lunch with his superior in Copenhagen and deliver new instructions at Godthåb the same day. Denmark's once remote colony in the North Atlantic had become, like the Faroe Islands, no more than an outlier of the mainland; with a very little stretch of the imagination it could be a part of Denmark herself; and the global conflict had brought home to Europe's political thinkers that any part of a country which lags heavily behind the others, any depressed county or province, can infect and weaken the rest of the country. Just as there could be no prosperity for Italy as long as her southern region, the Mezzogiorno, remained ignorant, poverty-stricken and hopeless, so Denmark too would suffer as long as she and Greenland were harnessed to the same political plough and the latter country was too immature to pull her proper weight.

Denmark's Parliamentary Committee on Greenland must have pondered these and other difficulties when it drew up, and presented to the government, on 12 June 1946, its report on the progress of its negotiations with the delegates from Greenland. It

> "set forth a number of proposals for economic enterprises, public health and various cultural tasks. It was realized that the establishing and carrying out of these measures would imply considerable expenses, which in any case would lead to an essential change for the worse in the balance sheet of Greenland. The committee called attention to the fact that the measures proposed should be kept within fully justifiable boundaries. It further recommended a raising of salaries and an improvement in the living standard of the Greenlanders, while at the same time admitting that the latter must in the long run be determined by the geographical and economic possibilities of the country, and that what should be aimed at must be that Greenland, as far as possible, should be able to be economically self-subsisting.
>
> "The idea underlying the report of the committee was undoubtedly that *Greenland and Denmark should, in a much higher degree than had hitherto been the case, be regarded as a complete economic unity, and that it must therefore be considered likely that the possibilities of income were transferred from the more prosperous Danish to the poorer Greenlandic sector. . . . Thus there has been a fundamental change in relation to the time before 1940, when the principle was that Greenland, as far as possible, should be economically independent.*" (Sveistrup, 1949, pp. 105–6).[2]

Denmark read this report very carefully, and realized that her wards were growing up. For two centuries they had contentedly sheltered under her protecting wings; but now the fledgelings were gliding from beneath her and bravely stretching out their own immature wings. What should she do?

[1] Cf. "In Greenland there has been a greatly increasing wish for drastic reforms [after the Second World War], and this also seems to be the case in Denmark, even though such reforms should result in very considerable additional expenses, the wish of the Danish public being by this means to strengthen the ties between the populations of Denmark and Greenland." (Sveistrup, 1949, pp. 89–90).

[2] Italics author's.

Whatever course of action she adopted would not concern herself alone. That she knew well. The eyes of all countries would focus on her, for the old League of Nations had collapsed at the opening of the war and the world was painfully giving birth to another organization, the United Nations, which men hoped would take up the defunct League's task and lead mankind to universal peace—if indeed universal peace is not an idle dream. Many colonies of Britain and France were breaking away from their motherlands, and the Soviet Union was loudly calling for an end to all colonialism—except within her own realm. Denmark possessed one colony only, Greenland; and although she had never submitted any report concerning its administration to the League of Nations, she decided, as a staunch supporter of that body's successor, to keep the world informed about conditions in her colony, the progress it was making towards self-government, and the plans she entertained for its future. She submitted her first detailed report to the United Nations in 1949, and from that year until 1954, when Greenland had ceased to be a colony, she kept the record up to date by submitting a new report yearly.

The 1946 discussions between colony and motherland had left both parties perplexed. Great changes had taken place in Greenland, and bold measures were needed to meet the new situation; but no one seemed quite clear just what these new measures should be. Everyone agreed that the island required ampler transport and communication facilities, more and better houses and roads, more schools and hospitals, and more fishing vessels equipped with diesel and gasoline engines. Only the Danish government, of course, could provide the heavy investment funds such cultural and economic aids demanded; but Denmark promised the money without hesitation. She then drew up a detailed five-year plan, embarked on a vigorous building program, and by the end of the decade had erected in Greenland many new dwellings, schools, hospitals, and industrial plants.

Nevertheless, no one was satisfied, for one reason because the program failed to deal with three of Greenland's most fundamental problems, namely, its political status, its quarantine from the outside world, and the government's monopoly of its trade. In the summer of 1948, accordingly, Denmark's Prime Minister himself visited Greenland, consulted with its two Provincial Councils in a joint session, and with their approval appointed before the year's end a Royal Commission to advise what further steps his country should take to bring about the reforms which everyone thought necessary. The Commission co-opted a large number of experts, grouped them into nine sub-committees and, working with phenomenal speed, published in February 1950 an 1,100 page report which dealt with virtually every phase of the colony's political, social, and economic life and recommended changes in all of them. Cabinet accepted the report and, using it as the basis of a long legislative program, pushed through parliament, in 1950 and 1951, a series of bills which swung the helm of Greenland's barque a full right angle and sped the vessel towards a haven not even marked on most politicians' charts.[1]

[1]In studying the administration of Greenland it has seemed to the writer that from the very beginning Denmark has succeeded in building, inside and outside the government service, a corps of well-trained experts in many fields, who have stood ready to answer her call without expecting fabulous salaries or special rewards; also that she has nearly always listened to their advice and used it to help her solve Greenland's complex problems, not to bury them from view or make them footballs of any political party (cf. pp. 11, 36, *et al.*)

The new course headed the island straight towards incorporation into the Danish kingdom on equal terms with Denmark's traditional counties, and to the union of Greenlanders with Denmark's European population. That was to be the colony's final haven; and the bills that went almost unchallenged through Denmark's parliament in 1950 and 1951 all carried it in that direction.

Before we study those bills in detail, however, let us continue the narrative of what happened in Greenland during the 1940's, since her constitutional evolution in no way obstructed the plans for her economic and cultural expansion.

Slowly, and with the deepest hesitation, had Greenland committed herself to the change-over from seal-hunting to fishing during the first two decades of the twentieth century; but during the third decade, when Denmark infused large sums of capital into the island, she speeded up the revolution until by 1945 the colony which requested still heavier investments from Denmark presented a very different face from the Greenland of 1900. Its fishing industry had prospered, and the tonnage of goods shipped to and from the island had multiplied, demanding more and more vessels for its transport.[1] The population too was prospering, and multiplying in number at a rate exceeding 1½ per cent annually. Fast as it was increasing, faster still had increased the per capita incomes of the Greenlanders until now their standard of living was little below that of the fishing populations in parts of northern Europe. Along with the rise in incomes had come also a change in living patterns, not in housing and clothing alone, but in food; for the diminution in the supply of meat caused by the decline of sealing[2] had increased the per capita consumption of European foods, in particular of sugar, rice, wheat, rye-flour, and tea.[3] This last article, tea, did not supersede coffee, which had been the favourite beverage for a hundred years, but merely supplemented it without appreciably lessening the quantity which Greenland imported and consumed.

As the prime instigator of these changes Denmark was keeping a close watch on everything that happened. It was with a favourable ear, therefore, that she now listened to the Greenlanders' requests and in 1946, guided by her Parliamentary Committee's report, opened wide her purse for the new development drive that report had outlined. In order to pump more money into the pockets of the actual workers she raised all wages and salaries throughout Greenland, even though market prices for the island's salted fish dropped back that year to their pre-war level. She supplemented the shipyard at Holsteinsborg with another at Egedesminde, laid the keel of a 500-ton vessel for the West Greenland trade and of a rather smaller one for East Greenland, chartered other vessels from private firms, and arranged a coastal service for West Greenland

[1]The Royal Greenland Trade lost two vessels during the war which it had not been able yet to replace. In 1949 the government had to arrange a number of special plane flights for passengers from Denmark to Greenland owing to the shortage of boats (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 74).

[2]The quantity of mutton obtained from the sheep farms in the south, and of whale meat supplied by the authorities at a very low price from its post-war whaling operations out of Holsteinsborg, could not nearly cover the deficiency. The government's rather obsolete whaling vessel captured 60 and 68 whales in 1946 and 1947 respectively, but only 31 and 28 in the two succeeding years (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, p. 50).

[3]See Table in Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 71.

that would run on a fixed time-table throughout the whole of the navigation season. These were merely some initial items in a program that included large investments for health and education, and heavy expenditures for docks, harbour works, new fishing boats, roads, housing, water-works, and construction of every kind. Denmark's financial accounts do not clearly separate expenses relating solely to Greenland from those for other parts of the realm, but in the year 1947–8 she recorded a deficit in her Greenland revenues of nearly 3¾ million crowns, which she covered from her own budget (see Table 9).[1]

Table 9. Main items of accounts concerning Greenland, 1947–8. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 76).

	Expenditures (*Kr.*)		*Revenues* (*Kr.*)
Joint expenditures	1,034,603		—
Administration	1,879,321		11,274,182
Public Health Service	1,254,523		—
Trade	7,470,311		3,532,291
Shipping	4,525,150		—
Churches and schools	1,405,750		—
Radio stations	920,662		—
Total	18,490,320		14,806,473
		Deficit	3,683,847

"On account of the trading monopoly the Government's revenues consist mainly in the gross profits on the goods bought and sold in Greenland together with certain other incomes, the most important item being the Government's dividends from the cryolite company 'Øresund'." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, pp. 75–6).

With its new housing program the government introduced some important improvements. Before the war the Greenlander had borrowed whatever money he needed from his District Council, bought his materials, and built, generally with his own hands, the kind of house that suited his fancy and his purse. Because very few, however, were skilful carpenters, and fewer still possessed any conception of architecture or the qualities and strengths of European building materials, many of their homes were poorly constructed: they lacked insulation, their timber had warped, and they were cold and draughty. A few individuals, more well-to-do than the others, had even built houses with several rooms, most of which they closed off during the winter months because they could not heat them. Now, however, the government insisted, on grounds of health, that the dwellings for which it supplied loans should conform to certain sanitary requirements; and it entered itself into the home-building field by designing a number of house-types suited to Greenland conditions, erecting groups of them in the larger settlements through Danish

[1]Cf. "Pursuant to sec. 3 of the [1925] Act on the Administration of Greenland, possible net profits which might arise from the monopoly trade carried on by the Danish State in Greenland, shall inure to the benefit of the Greenland community. The State Accounts in this century, however, show that the total expenses on Greenland have exceeded the income, so that the Danish State has made contributions to the Greenland community. Especially during the past few years, the development of the Greenland trade and the improvement of the standard of living in Greenland have involved great expenses on the part of the Danish State." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 80).

contractors who engaged to hire and train as many Greenlandic workmen as accorded with efficiency, and then selling or renting the homes to individual Greenlanders who applied for them. What was more important still, at the very beginning of this home-building program it set up a town-planning organization to draw up detailed plans for roads and building-sites, water supply, sewage, and the disposal of refuse in all the principal settlements of West Greenland; and by the summer of 1949 it was supplying water, electric light, and power, to four of those settlements, Julianehåb, Godthåb, Holsteinsborg, and Egedesminde, and making arrangements for their supply during the summer ahead to three others, Frederikshåb, Sukkertoppen, and Jakobshavn (cf. Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, p. 61). At the same time it was equipping them with liquid-fuel depots to power the fishery vessels and the motor boats which had now become the principal means of transport. This in turn called for a large central supply depot somewhere on Greenland's west coast; and for that depot the experts selected Færingehavn, partly on account of its strategic position, and partly because it was the main base of the Danish and Faroese fishermen who were now operating within Greenland's territorial waters. There, accordingly, the government set up a number of very large storage tanks, which it leased to a consortium of Danish oil companies, and from this central depot it replenished the settlement depots with freighters, or with small tankers operating under charter.

Holsteinsborg lost its halibut industry, as we saw (p. 82), through overfishing; and its shrimp industry, which had doubled its catch between 1946 and 1948, suffered a set-back in the summer of 1949 owing to abnormal weather conditions during the previous winter.[1] During the 1948 season, however, fishermen had discovered, near Christianshåb and Jakobshavn, in the Disko Bugt region, the two largest shrimp beds in the world, each of them more than ten miles long by five miles wide, and these beds more than compensated for the loss at Holsteinsborg. They promised to be a never-failing resource, as far as any biological resource can be unfailing, because large parts of them are too rocky to permit the use of trawls, but provide valuable conservation grounds from which the shrimp can spill over into trawlable areas in the vicinity. The government immediately erected two canneries and quick-freezing plants in the district, and in 1950 built a third cannery within the Julianehåb cluster of fiords, which shelters a much smaller shrimp bed. All three are operating today, and with an annual yield which rose from 210 tons in 1950 to 3,340 tons in 1963, constitute an industry that is by no means negligible. Shrimps still hold second place in Greenland's biological inventory, although in value, of course, they rank far behind her cod, which have been her principal resource since the middle of the century.

Down to about 1950 the shoals of cod seemed to increase in numbers, and to be displacing the seal population as far north as Umanak. Settlements in good fishing localities expanded rapidly, and with their larger opportunities, their canneries, stores, churches, and schools, drew in Greenlanders from all the outlying places, some of which were now abandoned: thus in 1934 West Greenland's gazetteer listed 164 settlements, large and small, 159 in 1945, but in 1952 only 144. By this last date open dinghies equipped with motors had largely

[1]Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, p. 62. This was the winter which halved Greenland's stock of sheep, reducing their number from 22,000 to 11,000 (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 24, and this volume, p. 78).

displaced the small wooden row-boats, and a few Greenlanders had acquired decked cutters which enabled them to fish farther out from shore; for they too were coming to realize that the future of the fishing industry no longer lay in and at the mouths of the fiords, but beyond them nearer the banks where vessels from Portugal, Germany, and other countries were hauling in large catches Bank fishing, however, demanded larger boats and more modern equipment than any Greenlanders yet possessed; and it also required special training, both theoretical and practical, in handling those boats and in navigating the high seas.

This training the government now proposed to make available to the Greenlanders in both their own land and in Denmark, and it began by using facilities already available in the motherland. In the winter of 1949–50 it enrolled nine Greenland youths for a five-month's course at its Fishery High School in Esbjerg; and to improve their knowledge of Danish, and help them follow the courses, it attached to the school a Danish teacher well versed in the Greenlandic tongue. The school provided theoretical training only, but for those who successfully completed the course the government arranged practical training with Esbjerg fishermen.

The number of Greenlanders that this Danish high school could accommodate each year was strictly limited, but Denmark planned to erect a similar high school in Godthåb, where the students would receive free board and lodging during the period of their training, and be eligible at its close for three months' practical experience on a 50-ton training cutter equipped with the most up-to-date fishing gear and commanded by a Danish instructor of long experience in Greenland waters. Something delayed the execution of this plan, but in 1959 Godthåb witnessed the opening of an even more ambitious Navigation School which could train skippers not for the larger fishing boats alone. but also for the small craft that carried freight and passengers from place to place along the coast. Only eight Greenlanders enrolled in this school during its first year, but by 1964 the number had increased to approximately 60. It was then offering courses that led to the same diplomas as similar courses in Denmark, but in the Eskimo language because the students were not sufficiently familiar with the Danish tongue. However, with today's speed-up in the teaching of Danish from the elementary schools onward, educational authorities hope not only to drop the Eskimo courses and give all instruction in Danish, but to expand the training so that graduates will qualify both for Greenland shipping and for the Danish merchant marine.[1]

[1]The J. Lauritzen Lines, which specialize in ice navigation in arctic and antarctic waters, and which recently pioneered a winter freight service up the St. Lawrence River to Quebec and Montreal, employ Greenlanders in their crews and enrol them with Danish seamen in their private training school, which is authorized to issue engineers' and mates' papers on ocean-going vessels (Cf. *J. L. News*, published by the J. Lauritzen Lines, No. 55, March 1965, p. 13). The Danish navy for its part enlists from ten to fifteen Greenland cadets each year for a voluntary six-months' training course at the Grønnedal Naval Base in south Greenland and on navy vessels sailing in Greenland waters. It reports as follows: "They render good service as interpreters and local guides, receiving in return excellent training in the use of small arms, navigation and practical seamanship, while improving their knowledge of Danish and the Danish way of life in daily contact with the Danish personnel.

"The Greenland Command is responsible for a wide range of duties, including off-shore and in-shore surveying, fishery protection, inspection of the extensive system of lights and beacons, sea rescue services, ice reporting, and so on, the work being often carried out under exacting conditions." (Jegstrup, 1961, pp. 187–8).

Nine years before it opened this Navigation School the government attached a third and very practical string to its fishery-education bow by extending to Danish and Faroese fishermen the right to operate in Greenland waters, on condition that they recruited up to one-half their crews in Greenland on the same terms as the other half, and trained them as fully as was possible under working conditions. This scheme has been highly successful, since both the Faroese and the Danish vessels are larger and better equipped than those the Greenlanders possess, and their skippers have been thoroughly trained from boyhood in deep-sea fishing.

The cod brought prosperity to Greenland's southwest coast only. Beyond Disko Bugt they were too scarce to support a fishing industry, and seals were neither numerous enough, nor their oil and skins of sufficient commercial value, to provide a living standard equal to that of the fishermen in the south. Farther north the "Polar Eskimos" whom the Thule airbase had displaced could count on no resources except seals, polar bears, an occasional walrus and, for a cash income, foxes, whose furs had risen slightly in value since the 1930's, but still averaged less than $10 apiece.

The east coast of Greenland presented a rather different picture. During the war the United States had posted troops in Angmagssalik, and built there a small airport and weather station which supplied the settlement with electricity. When the war ended and Denmark expanded this weather service by setting up a line of stations along the east coast (see p. 84), she poured in a flood of Danish technicians and skilled workers for their construction and maintenance, employed for odd tasks a large number of the local Greenlanders, and introduced, as had the United States troops earlier, a great variety of goods (such as large motor-boats and liquor) which she had carefully refrained from importing previously, lest it precipitate too violently the change from the aboriginal stone-age economy and the outlook of fifty years before to the complexity and confusion of the twentieth century. It had been her studied policy before the war to control the rate of this change, to keep the East Greenlanders on their own coast, independent and self-supporting through a more efficient utilization of its resources in fish and game until, guided and trained by educated West Greenlanders, they reached the cultural level of their western kindred and could merge with them into a homogeneous community. Only in this way, she judged, could she preserve the strong cohesiveness of East Greenland's slowly-evolving society, and protect individual families from being irresponsibly cast adrift in a world that was neither familiar to them nor invariably friendly.

Man, however, seldom foresees the future until it is already behind him, and change is often treacherous; it may creep along unnoticed, then leap upon the wayfarer before he realizes its presence. This happened to the East Greenlanders, and to the Eskimos of arctic America, during and after the Second World War, for which they were no more prepared than their rulers. Nearly everywhere their daily life was disrupted by military and para-military activities, or else by the wage-employment which accompanied or followed those activities and promised the unsophisticated natives an easier and less hazardous way of life without warning them that it would be temporary only. The East Greenlanders then neglected their hunting and trapping because wages, raised

in 1946 by a government decree which kept the prices of Greenland products stationary, held them to their places of employment, where they could buy foods to replace their seal meat, and purchase also other goods that had never entered their dreams.

> "Conditions on the east coast bear a striking resemblance to conditions at Upernavik, hunting is on a decline. The Commission considers it inadvisable to remove this population to the west coast and proposes instead other measures to increase the existing earning possibilities. Although the number of seal—and more particularly the number of large seal—is declining along the coast, the great reduction in catches is believed to be more closely related to conditions that may be altered by administrative intervention. Thus, the population has of late years failed to undertake the traditional hunting trips in the summer and the incessant moving of their winter quarters in accordance with the changing locations of the game, and is now remaining almost stationary at the Danish centres of administration Angmagssalik and Scoresbysund.[1] This is probably partly due to the fact that the wages paid to Greenlanders employed by the Danish Government by the increases made in the general tariff of late years have been increased to a far greater extent than the prices of the products derived from the special East Greenland trades.
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> "In order to make the Greenlanders revert to their natural trades and to increase productivity the Commission proposes that the price and wages policy in East Greenland be kept apart from the wages tariff which has hitherto applied to the whole country, and instead be adjusted on principles that will not make it an economic disadvantage for the hunter to continue his trade. Further, in order to prevent the population from subsisting on wages from the Administration to an extent in excess of actual requirements for Greenland labour, it is proposed to impose the following restriction on Danes employed on the east coast." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, pp. 49–50).

We need not linger over the details of those restrictions; the most important one prohibited the employment of Greenland servants unless approved by the settlement authorities. In North Greenland the local hunters' council, issued a decree that no hunter and his family might reside continuously at the new Thule post for more than two years; but no such decree was ever issued in East Greenland, perhaps because each settlement furnished the local Greenlanders with a significant number of permanent and temporary jobs.

In Scoresbysund, as at Thule, seals and bears abounded, and with the numerous foxes seemed capable of providing its East Greenland colonists with a livelihood for perhaps two or three decades. The Angmagssalik district, however, was much less rich in game, and the cod that frequented its waters lay at depths so great that the natives could not reach them with their lines. To remedy this situation the government offered them subsidies and loans for the purchase of modern fishing gear, and of small motor boats that would enable them to operate farther out from shore. It promoted also the fishing of the sharks which are fairly abundant along East Greenland's coast, for shark meat is excellent food for sled dogs, and shark liver yields an oil almost as rich in vitamin A as cod liver. By thus increasing the production of fish and game, and by providing a certain amount of wage-employment on government buildings and other enterprises, the authorities hoped to keep the Angmagssalik natives as self-supporting as those in Scoresbysund until they reached the cultural level of the West Greenlanders and were both able and willing to take their fate into their own hands.

[1]For similar conditions in the Hudson's Bay region of eastern Canada after the construction of airfields during the war see Jenness, 1964, pp. 73 *et seq.* and 95 *et seq.*

In all these efforts to exploit East Greenland's biological resources Denmark wisely enlisted the cooperation of the native population by setting up, first in Angmagssalik in 1946, and later in Scoresbysund, District Councils that resembled in many respects the Boards of Guardians which Rink had introduced into West Greenland a hundred years before. Some of each councils' members—who might be either men or women—were elected, others appointed, and the Danish manager of the settlement presided *ex officio* at all meetings. Like similar councils in West Greenland, each received from the administration 20 per cent of the value of all hunting products purchased in the district, and 2 per cent of the wages of all Danes and Greenlanders in government employ, and with these ample funds it granted loans for housing and other purposes, and cared for the aged, the needy, and orphans. Selected members constituted a tribunal whenever their president, the settlement manager, brought to trial some transgressor against the social code; but the council's most important function was to assess, and express its judgement on, all new measures that the administration was introducing or planning, and itself to propose other measures which might advance the welfare of the community.

Post-war Greenland thus presented Denmark with two quite separate problems: first, the development of the cod-fishery on the southwest coast, and, second, the development in every possible way of the regions where cod were lacking. Complicating both was the high growth rate of the human population in all inhabited districts. There were as yet no signs that the cod might not always be a stable resource along the west coast, an increasing resource perhaps that could sustain much greater exploitation. In other regions, however, exploitable fish were absent, save only at Angmagssalik, where they were neither over-abundant nor approachable for more than two or three months in the year on account of the drifting floe ice. Other regions appeared to lack economic resources of any kind except game, and game, in addition to being a wasting asset, had dropped in commercial value compared with man's other needs and would probably never recover.

> "The only place at which the population can subsist solely on hunting is the northernmost district in the west coast, Thule, where the population still pursues its old nomadic life hunting foxes and seal. . . .
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> "As will appear from the above, hunting in Greenland is to all intents and purposes being maintained as a separate trade mainly by administrative intervention and is rapidly declining, even if for a long time to come it will continue to make an invaluable contribution to Greenland economy." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, p. 50).

Denmark knew instinctively that there could be no simple solutions to Greenland's complex problems; but one thing she saw plainly, that although she had abolished illiteracy from the island, she had not yet brought within reach of any but a very few the education and the training the Greenlanders needed to cope with the new conditions that now confronted them, and to enter the world's arena with any fair chance of survival. They were like the young geese which gather in certain arctic meadows every mid-summer, awaiting the growth of the new, strong plumage that alone enables them to flee southward at the first onrush of winter's snow. Until the Greenlanders could obtain a better education than they were now receiving they too were prisoners

of their narrow environment, at the mercy of every economic storm that pitiless nature might choose to launch against them. Only by arming themselves with greater knowledge and experience would they acquire the strength to escape from that confinement, to wander afield, like the geese, in search of ampler pastures and, if nature proved too hostile, to take to the air either individually or in small flocks and wing their way to richer feeding-grounds across the ocean.

Education had marked time during the war years because the funds which the authorities could allocate to it barely sufficed to build a primary school in every outpost and supply a teacher for every classroom. Denmark decided now to change this situation, to provide without delay facilities for that higher education and training which the Greenlanders so insistently demanded. Accordingly, when she set up the Royal Commission in 1948, she instructed it to give special consideration to education and to draw up a detailed scheme of the island's requirements. Meanwhile, she left the control of education in the hands of the Church of Greenland which had fathered it during mission days and guided its destiny for two centuries; and she stood ready with a well-stocked cash-box to finance whatever needs appeared immediately urgent.

In weighing these needs she kept in mind four interlocking objectives. In the first place she wanted to raise the general level of knowledge so that the Greenland people could better understand the new world in which they were living, comprehend the changes that were impending, and consciously adjust themselves to them. Secondly, she deemed it imperative to increase and diversify employment, since the population was growing rapidly and no one could say how large a percentage of it could, or would be willing to, earn its livelihood by fishing; in any case the fishing industry itself required large numbers of boat-builders, machinists, motor mechanics, electricians, and other technicians whom the educational system as then constituted was still unable to provide. With a population increasing so fast, too, the government itself needed larger staffs for both the higher and the lower grades of its administrative and trade services; and, economically and politically, it was foolish to bring most of this staff from Europe when Greenland's own youth were crying out for more employment. Third, more technicians and more technical workers called for more and better schools, and the schools for more teachers, most of whom could be trained in Greenland, perhaps, but many, e.g. the science teachers, the engineers, the doctors, and the specialized nurses, only in Denmark. Finally, since the Eskimo language lacked the vocabulary for teaching any science subject or even arithmetic, trainees should be as competent in the Danish language as in their own Eskimo tongue; and to give them that competence in their early years necessitated a radical change in the primary schools.

As organized at the end of the Second World War these schools were teaching the same subjects as at the beginning of the century, namely, arithmetic, reading and writing the Greenlandic Eskimo language, religion, including the Lutheran catechism, history, geography, and natural history. Here and there, especially in the larger settlements, the curriculum contained some fringe subjects such as drawing, gymnastics, and singing; and about 1930 it was expanded to include a Danish language class wherever there was a teacher competent to undertake it. Outside this Danish language class, however, and the

arithmetic class, all instruction was given in Eskimo. Danish language classes became more numerous and widespread towards the middle of the twentieth century, when Greenland parents came to understand that a sound knowledge of that tongue would open up many new avenues of advancement. Whereas in 1931, therefore, only 1,230 of the 2,549 children attending school were offered classes in Danish, by 1948 the number had grown to 3,294 children out of 4,214 (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 37), and the authorities could confidently claim that the majority were acquiring a slight smattering of the Danish tongue. What was more important, their parents were becoming increasingly eager that the government should expand the teaching of Danish and change that smatter to fluency.

As yet, however, it was only a smatter, inadequate to qualify the vast majority of children for more advanced education, or for any but the humblest positions in the government service. Here was one very grave defect which Denmark could begin to rectify. The schools which the children entered at age 7 carried most of them through grades 1 to 7 by the time they reached 14, at which age schooling ceased to be compulsory. For 90 per cent of young Greenlanders this marked the end of their formal education, because the high school at Godthåb accepted less than 50 students, and its courses in science and arithmetic, given of necessity in Danish, required a much greater knowledge of that tongue than the children could obtain in the primary schools. From about 1920, it is true, the educational authorities had tried to improve the teaching in those schools by demanding higher qualifications from the teachers (see Table 10); and, after the war, to spread and deepen the knowledge of Danish, they had opened in three centres libraries of Danish books which served the local populations and circulated to other settlements along the coast. But progress had been slow, and a wide, almost unbridgeable gap still separated the primary schools from the high school.

This gap Denmark now proceeded to close by establishing four post-primary or intermediate schools, one each in Egedesminde and Julianehåb, and two, a boys' and a girls', in Godthåb, to provide grades 8 and 9 teaching to about a hundred of the best pupils from the primary schools. They offered more advanced courses in the subjects taught in the primary schools but, save in special circumstances, no new subjects. However, they gave much greater prominence to the teaching of Danish, and used that language in about two-thirds of the classes.

Grade 9 terminated in an examination almost, but not quite, equal to that for entrance into a secondary school in Denmark. It qualified the 16- or 17-year-old student for a position—or extra training for a position—as a clerk in an office or store, assistant catechist, infirmary student, or midwife. Those who aspired to become assistant catechists normally went to Godthåb for two year's training in a special catechist's school, after which they were appointed to a primary school in one of the smaller settlements; and girls who wished to become infirmary students, nurses' aides, or midwives sought training in a hospital. Every second year 25 or 30 graduates could expect admission to the Godthåb high school.

Denmark made significant changes also in this high school, which used the Danish language in practically all its classes and gave prominent places to

applied mathematics, chemistry, and physics. She enlarged the school so that it could accept more pupils; and she divided it into two lines offering each a group of two-year courses, one group slanted to train future civil servants, the other to train prospective teachers. The final examination in the former line approximated the corresponding examination in a Danish Commercial School, and those who passed readily found employment in one or other government organization. Graduates of the second line trained for two more years in the Godthåb seminary, after which they could be sent to Denmark for still further studies, or enter the Greenland Church and School Service as full catechists.

The seminary underwent little change. Since it trained students for teaching as well as for the priesthood Denmark merely accentuated the division of its courses into two lines, pedagogy and theology. All, or almost all, instruction, was in Danish, and the courses terminated in a comprehensive examination in both lines of study.

Table 10. Staff of the Greenland Church and School Service, 1910–47.
(From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 42).[1]

Category	*1910*	*1920*	*1930*	*1937*	*1947*
Danish clergymen	12	7	6	6	7
Greenland clergymen	4	10	12	13	16
Danish male teachers			4	6	13
Danish female teachers				3	8
Greenland teachers with special training			3	4	2
Seminary-trained catechists (Greenlanders)	45	60	68	69	86
Catechists (Greenlanders) with other training	52	49	56	78	83
Catechists (Greenlanders) without training	83	62	46	45	45
Total	196	188	194	224	260

Closely linked with this re-organized education was a four-year technical or vocational school, patterned after Danish vocational schools, which opened in 1947 in a large new building in Holsteinsborg. It enlisted most of its students from the lower classes of the post-primary schools, taught them various crafts, and arranged for some of them to receive practical training during the day in the Holsteinsborg shipyard, and such was the shortage of skilled labour that graduates experienced little difficulty in finding jobs. Greenland possessed one other technical school at this time, a telegraphers' school established at Godthåb during the war to train staff for her weather and radio stations, whose number she increased when she joined the international weather reporting service a few years later. The third technical school that was planned in the 1940's, the fishery or navigational school, suffered a delay, as we saw earlier (see p. 104) and did not open until 1959.

Figure 6 (reproduced from Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 31) conveniently charts the organization of education in December 1947.

[1]Note the higher training of the catechists after 1930; by 1947 only 21 per cent of them lacked any training whatever, and they served in the smallest settlements only. Note also the increase of Danish teachers after 1937; many, perhaps most, of them taught in the post-primary schools.

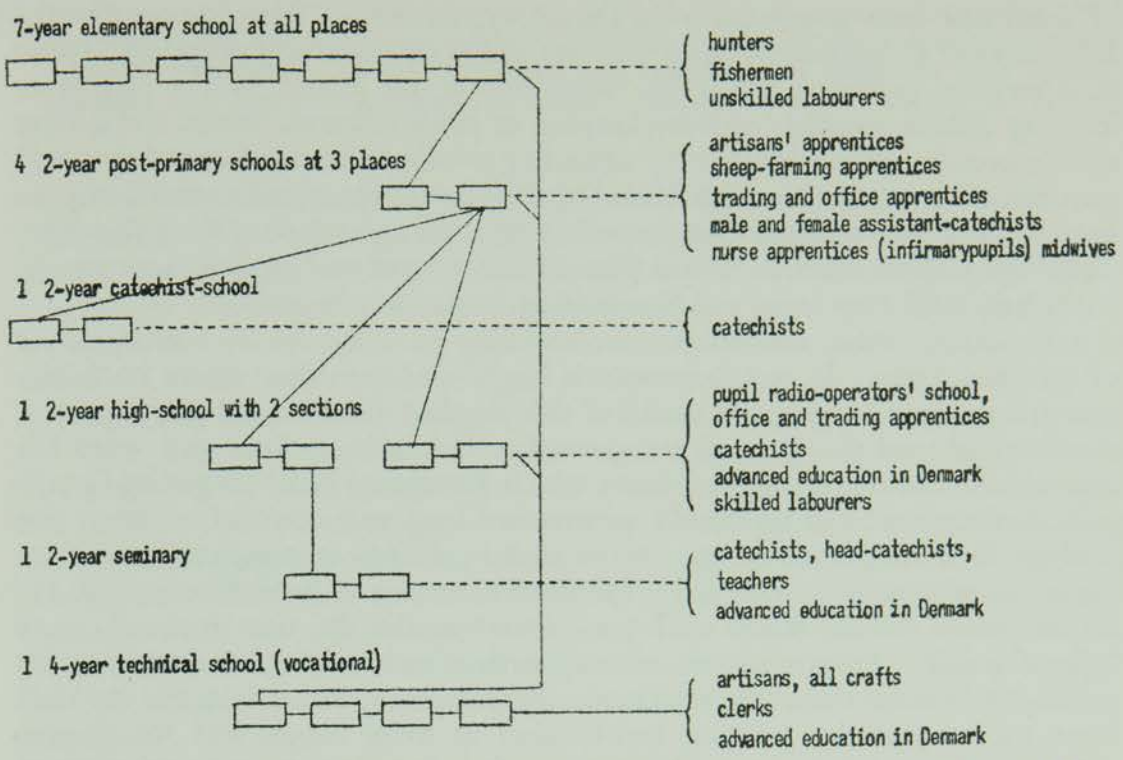

Fig. 6. The pedagogical organization of the educational system, 1947. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 31).

If Rink's ghost had been haunting the corridors of Denmark's parliament at this period, it would have chortled with joy at seeing how enthusiastically the country's post-war government was embracing his favourite scheme of training some of Greenland's youth in Denmark, and providing for those who needed it a "Greenlander Home" away from home in Copenhagen. Since his day, of course, transportation and communications had vastly improved: the radio now connected every major settlement with Godthåb, whence the broadcasting station erected in 1942 could transmit messages throughout the world; passenger and freight connections linked the settlements by sea with one another, and large aircraft joined Copenhagen with Søndrestrøm, whence an amphibian service carried passengers and mail north and south along the west coast. These developments should have pleased him greatly; but he would have rejoiced still more to read that

> "A small group of the most able students at various stages will be given supplementary training in Denmark" (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 32),

and to learn that in the very next year, 1950, no fewer than 135 youths were training in the motherland, acquiring fluency in the Danish tongue and drinking in Danish culture: two were studying law, and a third marine biology, at the University of Copenhagen, about 30 were taking advanced courses for such professions as teaching and the church, and the rest were training for a variety of trades and occupations such as fishing, baking, painting, office-work, machine-shops, and the electrical trade. At the same time Denmark was training also 126 Greenland girls as clerks, housemaids, nurses, and the like. Eighteen

of them had been sponsored by a Danish organization, "The Society for the Education of Greenland Women"; others had been taken to Europe by Danish civil servants returning home on retirement or on leave. Not a few were learning Danish methods of housekeeping in private homes, where some were able to broaden their education by attending evening classes, so that they could pass into other occupations as soon as they became acclimatized to the European environment (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1951, pp. 44–6). More than fifty years had elapsed since Rink had planted this educational sapling, but now at last it had sunk deep roots and was putting forth leafy branches.

Gradually, then, education was extending its influence into every phase of Greenland life. In one, however, it lagged—in sanitation, where its failure was grievously damaging the health of the people. Climate and physiography could be blamed for part of the prevalent ill-health; guiltier still were the diseases, unknown in aboriginal times, which Europeans had brought to Greenland in their train. The island's winters are long and cold, its summers too cool and brief to permit the growth of trees in the few places that carry more than one or two inches of soil. Hence no wood was available to heat the Greenlanders' homes, while coal was expensive, and the new fuel, oil, more expensive still. The eighteenth century natives had insulated their stone huts with sod to render the crude structures draught-proof, had driven the icy chill from the interiors by burning seal-blubber in stone lamps, and for greater warmth and comfort had crowded three or four families into each one-roomed dwelling. Most of their twentieth century descendants still crowded together into one or two rooms, because the frame houses they were building for their individual families not only lacked indoor sanitary arrangements and running water, but were too poorly insulated to keep out the penetrating cold. But now the contagious diseases introduced by the white men had become endemic, or nearly so, and were exacting a terrible toll. Danish doctors and Danish and Greenlandic nurses incessantly preached hygiene and sanitation, but only a minority of the people heeded them and took what precautions they could to reduce the menace to their health. In a few settlements the government had begun to erect blocks of individual houses and even one or two apartment buildings, centrally heated and equipped with running water from the reservoirs it was building, wherever the size of the community warranted the high cost of constructing a dam and blasting deep trenches in the solid rock to keep the pipelines from freezing. But in the 1940's the population was so mobile, and increasing so rapidly, that in the four short months when construction was possible the authorities could barely meet the demand for new housing, and were totally unable to provide dwellings for those already occupying homes in which they seemed able to "get by".

> "The fact is, that despite all improvements and advances in the facilities available to the health authorities and despite quite a considerable improvement in the standard of living of the Greenlanders, no material improvement can be traced as regards the incidence of tuberculosis. New cases continue to come in and the tuberculosis mortality rate is high. In order that real progress may be made in the crusade against tuberculosis it is not sufficient that health authorities are provided with all means of treating and preventing the disease, but the population must also cooperate, and there has so far been a pronounced lack of such cooperation. Personal hygiene is still at much too low a level and generally sanitary conditions in the dwellings could be better. Almost all medical officers report this low standard, and only at a few settlements some few Greenland

families evince a real understanding of the importance of hygiene and sanitation. The country has still too many poor dwellings, in which interior, hygienic amenities are very primitive, the houses are over-populated and generally too small and only sparsely equipped with the most necessary furniture." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1951, p. 21).

The Greenlanders appear to have inherited the susceptibility to pulmonary tuberculosis of their Eskimo ancestors, for the administration estimated that this disease was afflicting, or had afflicted, from 7 to 10 per cent of the population: in 1947 its victims were occupying nearly 70 per cent of all hospital beds. Denmark had already opened a vigorous campaign against it, as had also Canada and the United States in their arctic territories, all three countries using the new drugs and the new techniques that had been developed before and during the war. Like her neighbours, too, Denmark was equipping her hospitals with X-ray apparatus, and vaccinating at every medical station all tuberculin-negative individuals her doctors could discover. To these measures she was adding a propaganda campaign stressing the need for improved sanitation and hygiene, though she realized that no amount of propaganda would be as effective as the replacement of the old substandard homes with dwellings and apartments as modern as those in the motherland, and a substantial rise in the general level of the Greenlanders' incomes, could her economists find some means of producing that rise.

Poor hygiene and poor sanitation promoted the spread not of tuberculosis only, but of scabies and gonorrhoea. In the late 1940's Greenland's medical staff treated 500 cases of scabies in the Sukkertoppen district alone, and its records listed in Greenland more than 1,200 cases of gonorrhoea, a disease rampant in every district except the Thule. They treated it at first with sulphonamides, but after 1947, when many patients were showing resistance to sulpha drugs, with penicillin. The new aircraft services doubtless accelerated the spread of these and other diseases, even though they allowed many patients suffering from very serious ailments (particularly appendicitis, which was fairly common) to be evacuated to Europe. Certainly they contributed to the rapid spread in 1949 of a violent epidemic of whooping cough, which attacked over 4,000 people and caused heavy mortality, especially among children.

In 1947 a foreigner who arrived by plane brought syphilis to five Greenlanders before the authorities detected its presence and hastily radioed to Denmark for help. Without delay Denmark sent out a specialist, who kept the victims in isolation and stamped out the disease before it could spread more widely. But the government, aware that it might reappear at any time now that large passenger aircraft running on regular schedules linked West Greenland with both Europe and America, quickly set up a sero-bacteriological laboratory at Julianehåb to intercept and check any future outbreak. Since 1947 several have been signalled, the last and most serious (17 cases) in the winter of 1964–5. On every occasion, however, the authorities have reacted immediately and prevented the disease's diffusion.

In 1947 another disease, trichinosis, ravaged the Disko Bugt region and carried off many of its 300 victims. The authorities then discovered that numerous foxes, polar bears, and sled dogs had been infected, and they warned the people by radio to avoid eating raw meat, or meat that was imperfectly

Table 11. Organization of Greenland's health service, 1947.
(From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 19).

Medical stations	*Population*	*Med. Officers*	*Hospital beds*	*Nurses*	*Midwives trained in Denmark*	*Midwives trained in Greenland*	*Medical depots*
Nanortalik	1047	1	15	1	1	6	29
Julianehåb	3229	2	60	3	3	13	
Frederikshåb	1286	1	27	1	1	8	9
Godthåb	1994	1	40	2	1	8	10
Sukkertoppen	1749	1	30	1	1	5	8
Holsteinsborg	1616	1	14	1	1	2	8
Egedesminde	2571	1	18	1	1	17	19
Godhavn	504	0	6	1	1	3	2
Jakobshavn	1700	1	50	2	2	9	8
Qutdligssat	1299	1	21	1	1	2	2
Umanak	1490	1	34	2	1	8	10
Upernavik	1459	1	14	1	1	10	9
Thule	353	1	8	1	0	1	2
Angmagssalik	1111	1	10	1	0	6	2
Scoresbysund	222	0	2	1	0	1	0
Færingehavn (in summer)		1	14	1	0	0	0
By private arrangement also at:							
Ivigtut	about 150	1	7	1			
Sukkertoppen Sanatorium			20	1			
Umanak Sanatorium			20	1			

cooked. In that same year Copenhagen sent to Greenland two public health officers to investigate the island's medical needs and draw up new regulations laying particular emphasis on hygiene; and later, she incorporated their recommendations in a Greenland National Health Act, which aligned the island's services with those of Denmark by placing them under the control of a senior governmental Health Officer in Copenhagen.

In all matters relating to Greenland education and health Denmark, more fortunate than Canadian or United States' administrators of the American Arctic, could count on strong support from her own people. In 1948 a private organization, "The Society in Aid of Greenland Children", was operating two sanatoria for children in Greenland, one at Sukkertoppen and the other at Umanak, and was preparing to take over a third sanatorium that was being built at Julianehåb: these three institutions together would care for 70 to 80 children. Only about one-third of the society's funds came from the government and from the Greenland Council; two-thirds it raised from public contributions. At the same time a second organization, "The Society for the Education of Greenland Women", was cooperating with the government in promoting the training of Greenland girls at Danish hospitals; for although by 1947 the colony's permanent medical staff (excluding the two children's sanatoria, the summer medical station at Færingehavn, and the cryolite company's hospital in Ivigtut) comprised 14 doctors and 20 fully qualified nurses (Table 11),

almost all this staff was Danish. To be sure, it counted also 114 Greenlandic midwives, but of that number only 15 had received the advanced training given to the profession in Denmark, because the colony had been isolated from the motherland throughout the war; and even 114 midwives did not fill the island's needs, for several settlements still lacked any medical care at all. "The Society for the Education of Greenland Women", therefore, undertook to search out promising candidates in Greenland's schools and to arrange places for them in Danish hospitals, where they could receive exactly the same training as Danish nurses and, after passing their examinations, attend a number of post-graduate courses before returning to their native land.

If we now compare Greenland's health service in 1947 (Table 11) with its health service in 1935 (Table 4), we will see that it expanded continuously during those twelve years, despite the dislocations of the war, but that its rate of expansion was no greater than the growth rate of the population; for while the latter increased from about 18,000 to 21,630, the health service added to its staff only four doctors and four trained nurses, and to its equipment 25 hospital beds. The two public health officers whom Denmark sent out in 1947 to assess the situation duly presented their plans for reorganizing and expanding the colony's medical service, but the Danish government refrained from putting them into effect immediately because it needed to correlate them with other plans which it was assembling–plans for revising the island's constitution, for accelerating its economic growth, for modifying and improving the education of its inhabitants, and several others, some of which would probably result in considerable shifts of population. And after all these plans had been formulated and thoroughly studied, the government had to embody their substance in separate bills for parliament's approval. We need not wonder, then, that not until 1951 was Denmark able to enact a new Greenland National Health Act which, combined with other acts, bound the colony inseparably with Europe and set it moving along a new path even more challenging than its earlier one.

CHAPTER 6

Greenland becomes a province of Denmark: 1948–53

In 1959 the Hawaiian Islands, which lie two thousand miles west of the United States in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and support a population of 633,000, roughly 40 per cent of Chinese or Japanese descent, became the 50th state of the union, entitled to elect two of its citizens to sit in the House of Representatives in Washington; and on 5 June 1953, Greenland—a group of islands too, perhaps—which straddles the Arctic Circle a thousand miles west of Norway and in that year supported only about 25,000 inhabitants, 97 per cent of them bearing Eskimo blood in their veins, became a province[1] of Denmark and an integral part of that Scandinavian country. Such has been the effect of the radio, the aircraft and, more than all else, the revolution in men's minds now that our once limitless earth has shrivelled into a circumscribed sphere which the satellites we send skyward orbit in two or three hours. Yet 99 per cent of us continue to look at our feet rather than towards the horizon, where already the storm-clouds are gathering from two directions, from the one threatening nuclear annihilation, from the other widespread famines and destruction through starvation.

To celebrate Greenland's "Coming-of-age" Denmark's reigning monarchs, King Frederik and Queen Ingrid, sailed in the royal yacht to all the principal settlements along the island's west coast and received an enthusiastic welcome at every port of call. The union of the ex-colony with the motherland well merited the celebration. It was an epochal constitutional event that culminated over two hundred years of faithful stewardship; and Denmark's population approved it unanimously in the referendum that followed parliament's ratification of the enabling bill. That bill was not an isolated item of legislation, of course, but only the final act—the cap-stone as it were— of a carefully prepared series which embodied the recommendations of the 1948 Royal Commission. Let us now examine the most important of those acts, beginning with the one which modified Greenland's administrative organization, the National Council Act passed by Denmark's parliament on 27 May 1950.

[1] I have found no English word which exactly defines the status of Greenland. European Denmark is divided into a number of geographical and political units, each called an *amt*, which Danish writers consistently translate "county". Greenland, however, is immeasurably larger than any *amt*, and because of her remoteness from Europe, has received a greater measure of autonomy than an *amt* enjoys. At least one English-language publication of the Danish government ('Greenland', Ed. by Bure, 3rd ed., 1961, p. 8) has termed her a "province", and Danish translators frequently refer to the West Greenland council of 13 members established by the National Council Act of 1950 as the "Provincial" Council. That would seem to justify using the same terms here.

Table 12. Evolution of self-government in West Greenland.

–1782	Greenland unorganized. Arbitrary rule of local Danish trader.
1782–1857	West Greenland organized into two provinces, each governed by a Danish Inspector who reported direct to Copenhagen. Provinces subdivided into 12 districts, 5 in South Greenland, 7 in North Greenland. Administrator of each district the local Danish trader, supervised by the province's Inspector.
1857–1908	Provinces and districts remain unchanged. Each district now administered by a Board of Guardians of both Danes and Greenlanders, the former appointed, the latter elected, and the local Danish missionary served as president. The Board functioned as (a) municipal council, (b) local law-court for minor cases, (c) welfare agency, using funds provided by a tax on exports.
1908–1925	Provinces unchanged. Each Danish Inspector now advised by an elected Provincial Council, advisory only. South Greenland divided now into 11 districts, and these districts into 26 municipalities; North Greenland divided now into 12 districts, and these into 36 municipalities. Municipal Councils, elected, replace the Boards of Guardians. Greenlanders only, not Danes, eligible for these Councils. Law Courts: minor cases handled by Municipal Councils; serious ones by a provincial court consisting of two Danes and two Greenlanders, with Inspector presiding.
1925–1950	Provinces unchanged. Danish Inspectors now called Governors. Districts reduced from 23 to 13, each of which now elected a mixed Danish-Greenlandic council to supervise its schools, administer pensions etc. Municipalities increased to 76, each of which elected a council for which Danes were again eligible. Its functions remained the same.
1950–	The whole of Greenland incorporated into Denmark as a province and the island divided into 3 districts called West Greenland, East Greenland, and North Greenland. The two provinces of West Greenland, previously called North and South Greenland, as well as its two Provincial Councils, were abolished, and the region made autonomous. West Greenland is governed now by an elected council, the Greenland Provincial Council, presided over by the Governor of the island appointed by Copenhagen; and it is subdivided into 16 municipalities, each with its own elected council. A new single Criminal Code has been introduced: serious cases are handled by a resident judge in Godthåb, appointed by the Justice Department in Copenhagen, aided by two laymen appointed every four years by the Greenland Provincial Council.

1. The National Council Act, 1950

This act divided Greenland for administrative purposes into three districts: West, East, and North. The new district of West Greenland combined the former province of South Greenland with the contiguous and most populous part of the former North Greenland; and the new North Greenland comprised the former Thule district together with the almost uninhabited stretch of coast joining it to West Greenland. East Greenland remained unchanged (see Fig. 1).

Because of their remoteness and sparse populations, the act kept the districts of East and North Greenland under the administrative control of the Prime Minister's Second Department in Copenhagen, today the Greenland Ministry (Ministeriet for Grønland). In West Greenland, on the other hand, it

abolished the thirteen administrative districts with their separate councils and re-subdivided the coast into sixteen municipalities, each with an elected council of from three to seven members to handle its local affairs and administer all social legislation, i.e. all assistance to the aged and the needy. It abolished also the two provinces into which the Act of 1908 had divided West Greenland (see p. 90), and replaced their two councils with a single council of thirteen members, the Greenland Provincial Council, which thus became the political voice of the entire west coast (see Table 12).[1] All men and women above the age of 23 years were to elect the members of both the Greenland Provincial and the Municipal councils every fourth year.

The west coast held its first combined election in the autumn of 1951, an occasion that was celebrated as a public holiday from Upernavik to Kap Farvel. Thenceforward it received from Copenhagen not two governors as before but one, who presided at every meeting of the new Greenland Provincial Council. For a brief period geographical conditions normally prevented these meetings from taking place more often than once a year (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, pp. 114–15); but at the present time the Council holds two sessions a year, a short one lasting only about two weeks in the spring, and a longer one lasting from five to six weeks in the summer. To represent it between sessions it appoints a standing committee, which discusses with the governor all important issues which may arise, particularly financial ones, and ratifies in the name of the whole Council whatever measures appear necessary.

> "The Governor of Greenland is President of the Council and is like the chief administrative officers of the Danish counties, who in the rest of Denmark are presidents of the County Councils, a civil servant. . . .
>
> "The Greenland Council is on many points similar to the County Councils in the rest of Denmark, although due to the location and the special conditions obtaining in Greenland, it has more extensive powers than the County Councils. . . .
>
> "The Municipal Councils are in charge of the social-welfare services within the individual municipalities. The scope of their other activities is comparable in some measure to that of municipal councils in the rest of Denmark. The revenues of the municipalities are allotted to them by the Greenland Council." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, pp. 14, 15).

Such was the new organization which Denmark now devised for Greenland, in close cooperation with the colony itself, to take account of the political, economic and social changes which had occurred during the previous hundred years. It promised at least two advantages over the earlier organization. First, it gave long overdue recognition to some of those changes by severing politically one part of the island from the remainder on the basis of its different economic activities and cultural development: it thereby retained as wards of Denmark, under the direct control of Copenhagen, the less accessible regions

[1] Cf. "All matters of general importance with regard to Greenland have to be submitted to the Greenland Committee of Parliament (a special committee appointed by the Danish Parliament), and this committee may demand information on all matters concerning the administration of Greenland and the conditions of the Greenland population. Furthermore, the committee receives an annual report from the Prime Minister's Department on conditions in Greenland during the past year and on the activities of the Administration. The committee comprises 10 members, 2 of whom are the Greenland members for the time being of the Danish Parliament, while the remaining 8 members are elected by that body." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 16).

of eastern and northern Greenland, whose inhabitants still supported themselves by hunting and, economically and culturally, were less advanced than the West Greenlanders; and it granted to the West Greenlanders, most of whom were fishermen as civilized and prosperous as the majority of fishermen in northern and western Europe, a large measure of autonomy and partnership with the motherland. Secondly, it satisfied the natural desire of the West Greenlanders, who comprised over 95 per cent of the colony's population, to acquire equal political status with the Danes who resided permanently in their midst. Juridically they occupied for one year, and one only, a special, and in their own eyes an inferior status; then parliament, in 1951, passed another act, the Act on the Administration of Justice in Greenland, which corrected that anomaly and abolished every legal distinction between Greenlanders and Danes.

The procurement of the revenues needed by West Greenland's local authorities created a difficult problem. Hitherto the now-abolished triad of councils, Provincial, District, and Municipal, had been receiving from the Danish Treasury the 20 per cent tax on all Greenland products purchased and exported by the Royal Greenland Trade, together with the 2 per cent tax on the salaries of all government employees; and the funds from those two sources had satisfied all their requirements. It was the levy on exports which had supplied by far the larger percentage of the money. That tax, however, Denmark now expected to abolish, because she intended to relax her trade monopoly by allowing private firms to open trading stores in Greenland and handle the island's products in competition with the government trading company, and the entry of private merchants would demand such intricate arrangements to maintain a proper balance between the prices paid for the export goods (whose value on world markets naturally fluctuated considerably), and those charged for imported necessities, that a continuation of the export tax without victimizing the Greenlanders appeared impracticable. In a country more commercially minded it would have been easy to raise the money through a direct income tax; but even in West Greenland, where the government had opened a savings bank in the second half of the nineteenth century and introduced in 1926 a special coinage and paper currency, the population still lacked real confidence in a money-and-banking system, and in out-of-the-way places often dispensed with money altogether by reverting to primitive barter. There could be no land tax where only the few Greenlanders who had visited Denmark could understand that land might be divided and subdivided into tiny plots after the manner of a whale-carcass, and be gobbled up by particular individuals; nor any property tax that would bring in an appreciable revenue when a man owned almost nothing except his personal clothing, the tools of his trade or profession (i.e. boat, fishing-gear), and the wooden house, generally of poor construction, which sheltered his family and himself. Even today, in Godthåb, a town of 4,000 inhabitants, in Julianehåb, a second town of approximately the same size, and in other rapidly growing settlements[1] with regular

[1]Cf. "However, one particular natural resource, namely suitable building sites, will become scarce as population increases. Until very recently, land in Greenland was abundant. It has no market value, and it is generally supposed that the user has only an occupant's right to the plot on which he has built his dwelling. Quite recently, however, a few cases have been noted, when old houses were sold at prices so high that they must be considered to include the capitalized value of a site rent." (Boserup, 1963, p. 481).

streets and large concrete buildings erected from architects' plans, there is still no private ownership of land, although good building sites are scarce and becoming scarcer and more desirable year by year. In such circumstances how could Greenland, from her own resources and without burdening the taxpayers of Denmark, raise sufficient money to breathe the life and strength into her Provincial Council that would enable it to carry out its own functions, and at the same time distribute ample funds to the Municipal Councils so that they in turn could carry out theirs?

Denmark set forth her solution to this problem in a supplementary Act to Regulate Greenland's Public Funds, which she presented for parliament's ratification in 1951. It abolished the 20 per cent charge on Greenland products and the 2 per cent tax on the salaries of government employees in Greenland, and imposed in their place import levies on certain luxury commodities, namely, tobacco, beer, wines, spirits, malt, hops, sugar, chocolate, and candies. All these could be classified as sumptuary goods, so that the levies would fall most heavily on the higher-income bracket of the Greenland population and on Danes residing in Greenland, thereby producing a slight but perhaps not insignificant redistribution of incomes. The resultant increases in the prices of imported spirits, wine, and beer, and of malt and hops used for making beer, would help to prevent the abuse of alcoholic beverages;[1] and the duties on sugar,[2] chocolate, and candies should reduce the excessive consumption of those commodities and check to some extent, perhaps, the dental decay noticeable everywhere along the coast: but these effects, however desirable, ranked second to the raising of money. Denmark had included tea and coffee in the list she originally submitted to Greenland's Council, but that body had firmly struck out those articles on the ground that they were no longer luxuries but necessities, and should be left untaxed even though their exemption would reduce the anticipated revenues by almost one-half.

The passage of this supplementary Act provided Greenland with a working revenue of about two million kroner,[3] an amount which would enable her, Denmark hoped, to defray all social expenditures on her west coast, and even perhaps some administrative costs. To the layman this might seem just a matter of bookkeeping, since the motherland was planning to spend for schools, hospitals, and other social requirements in Greenland very much more than two million kroner. In practice, however, the artificial separation of capital from social and administrative expenses served a very useful purpose:

[1]Cf. "When this craving [for liquor] has not led to the same unfortunate results as elsewhere, this is because the monopolistic administration has been able to limit the consumption of alcohol by limiting the access to it. The quantity of alcohol permitted has always been strictly rationed . . . and there are very strict provisions to prevent abuse of the right to provide alcohol in trading with the Greenlanders.

"Of later years it seems as if attempts have been made to evade the regulations regarding alcoholic drinks by producing beer from sugar, and one of the measures to prevent this has been the rather strict rationing, which during the last war has been carried out in Greenland." (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 190).

[2]Cf. "at the coal mines of Qutdligssat the consumption of sugar per individual has been proved to be greater than in any country that I know of." (Sveistrup, 1949, p. 37).

[3]In 1958 import duties gave Greenland a revenue of nearly 7 million kroner (Christiansen, 1959, p. 324), a clear indication of the growing prosperity. Mr. N. O. Christensen now informs me that in 1965, after the government in 1964 added duties on both tea and coffee, and the native population as well as the number of seasonal workers from Denmark had greatly increased, Greenland's revenue rose to 26 million kroner.

it gave the leaders of the West Greenlanders valuable training in drawing up national programs, administering large public funds, and keeping their expenditures within the limits of their allotted revenues.

2. Act relating to Hunting and Fishing, and Commercial Loan Act, 1950

Faced with mounting criticism of its trade monopoly, and of the quarantine of Greenland which the seasonal influx of Danish construction workers was puncturing every year, Denmark's government submitted to parliament in 1950, and parliament ratified on May 27 of that year, a bill on Hunting and Fishing in Greenland, to which it attached a special bill dealing with Commercial Loans.

It will place these bills in clearer perspective if we review the situation prior to May 1950.

Under international law, the world's oceans are free to all mankind, and vessels of every nation may fish in the open sea outside the limits of Greenland's territorial waters, which Denmark, following the example of several other countries, advanced in 1963 from three to twelve miles beyond the headlands and outer islands. The most productive fishing banks lie outside this limit, and there large vessels of several countries uninterruptedly haul in the cod from one spring to the next, working in such close proximity that they can almost see each other's catches. In a few places the banks thrust short arms through the territorial waters to touch the coast; but very few Greenlanders have taken advantage of this, because their boats have been too small to venture into waters often whipped up by violent storms.

In 1927, as we saw earlier (see p. 86), Denmark passed a law permitting her own and Faroe Island fishermen, who employed larger boats than the Greenlanders, to work the outer parts of the territorial waters; and she also sanctioned their use of Færingehavn as a base. This was the first, and for a time the only, crack in her rigid quarantine. During the war, of course, and immediately after it, she had allowed the United States to establish several military bases on Greenland's east and west coasts, but that country had restored to Danish control all but two of them: Thule in the far north and part of the military field in Søndre Strømfjord. In those two localities the United States was prohibiting its personnel from conducting any commercial fishing or hunting, and from visiting other settlements without the permission of the Greenland government. Legally, therefore, Denmark's trade monopoly remained unchanged, and her quarantine of the island as rigid as before, except for the concession to Danish and Faroese fishermen, the influx of several score Danish workmen each summer, and the growing number of individuals, both Danish and non-Danish who, with Denmark's permission, were visiting for one reason or another various districts along the west coast. So numerous, however, had become these outsiders that supporters of the quarantine, if any survived, could no longer advance the oft-repeated excuse that it was checking the introduction of European diseases. Most of those diseases, in fact, had reached Greenland many years before, and as long as the island maintained even slender contact with Denmark, it was impossible to keep out such seasonal epidemics as influenza which, like water, had flooded in every spring, wreaked their damage and then evaporated.

Despite some reduction in its efficacy, therefore, the quarantine that guarded Denmark's trading monopoly remained in force, and the Danish government continued to control all regular transportation to West Greenland so that no private individual could reach that coast without using one of its vessels or aircraft. If he sailed there in his own or a chartered boat and entered one of its ports without authority, he broke the law and rendered himself liable to its sanctions; and if he smuggled himself ashore his presence would quickly become known to everyone in the vicinity, for in 1950 he would have found no commercial restaurant or eating place in which to satisfy his hunger, and no hotel in which to spend the night. These conveniences are lacking even now in many settlements, and the few that exist are of frontier type, friendly and relatively comfortable, but without the amenities, reasonable and unreasonable, which the average tourist and business man of today's world demands. So no itinerant trader, whether he spoke Danish or not, could encroach on the government's monopoly, as many a fur trader had encroached—legally it must be admitted—on the trading domains of the Hudson's Bay Company in northern Canada, where they bought up large numbers of the Eskimos' furs right under the noses of that company's servants. As late as 1950, as far as the rest of the world could observe, Denmark was still isolating Greenland in the North Atlantic, a lone *Ultima Thule* in the ice-strewn sea.

The Act on Hunting and Fishing brought a sudden end to this isolation. It annulled the quarantine, and extended to all Danish subjects resident in Greenland, and to other subjects permitted by the crown (a concession designed to benefit especially the Faroese), the right to hunt and fish commercially anywhere in Greenland's territorial waters, and not, as before, in its outer waters alone. Only Danish nationals received this privilege, in conformity with the usual practice under international law. Conformable to international practice, too, though not previously sanctioned in Greenland, the act allowed any Danish subject, and any Danish cooperative or limited company, but no others, to establish commercial enterprises in Greenland, and to export Greenland products in competition with the government's own commercial organization, the Royal Greenland Trade.

Thus in the fullness of time Denmark, who in the eighteenth century had imposed a monopoly of all trade in Greenland, had ceaselessly guarded it ever since with a strict quarantine, despite heavy financial losses, and for at least a hundred years, had resisted strong pressure from her own citizens to resign it, now of her own measured accord abandoned both the monopoly and the quarantine and opened—or at least half-opened—Greenland to private enterprises, and to all the trade currents and commercial tides of the western world.

". . . the Royal Commission on Greenland, reporting in 1950, found that the advantages of a State monopoly—namely the protection given to the indigenous population—were outweighed by the negative effects of isolation and stagnation. Following the recommendation of the Commission, the monopoly rights of the Greenland Trading Company were abolished in 1950. The company itself continued to exist and to be the dominating business enterprise in Greenland." (Boserup, 1963, p. 487).[1]

[1]Boserup's judgement in the sentence preceding this quotation carries considerable weight. He writes "in retrospect, most people would now agree that this policy [government monopoly of trade] was necessary to protect the Greenlanders against the disruptive, if not fatal, impact which private foreign business might have made upon the exceedingly weak Greenland community of 10–20,000 souls."

Even before the Commission issued its report the government had realized the stagnating effects of its monopoly, for it informed the United Nations in 1949 that

> ". . . the trading monopoly fixed its prices in Greenland quite independently of prices in international trade, it was necessary to maintain a strict isolation of the country. In the opinion of both the Danish Government and the Provincial Councils such isolation can no longer be maintained, and the previously mentioned committee of 1948 is working on the question as to how the ties of the monopoly may be relaxed without a principal change in the social policy which has characterized the Danish rule.
>
> "The basic idea is that in future Greenland's contact with the international market may be presumed to become even more intimate, and that it will therefore become necessary to improve the productivity in Greenland to such an extent as to place the Greenland population on the same footing as corresponding populations elsewhere. *The cultural development must now be considered to have proceeded so far that the Greenlanders not only desire, but also are capable of, sustaining the difficulties which must be expected to ensue from the very considerable fluctuations in market prices.*" (Rept. Prime. Min. Second Dept., 1949, pp. 79–80).[1]

Although she voluntarily abandoned her monopoly, however, Denmark still considered it necessary to maintain a protective shield over Greenland's economic fortunes. Unless she regulated and to some extent controlled the activities of private enterprise some independent trader might unscrupulously exploit the populations of isolated settlements where he encountered no competition. In times of economic depression, too, private businesses might silently close their doors and steal away, abandoning the Greenlanders to their fate, or they might charge exorbitant prices for imported articles and pay the Greenlanders very low prices for their products.

She found her shield in an artificial levelling of the prices to be paid for Greenland products so that they would approximately balance their price fluctuations in international markets, and in the establishment of a fluctuation equalization fund,[2] to be operated in conjunction with the price-levelling mechanism by a special organization, the Greenland Export Sales Organization which she planned to set up; producers could then sell directly to this organization, if they preferred, instead of to the regular trading firms. In those first days she anticipated that the retail operations of her own trading company, but not perhaps its transportation services, would rapidly decline as private merchants and industrialists from Denmark rushed into Greenland with new enterprises and drew more and more Greenlanders into its commercial life. However, no such rush materialized, and the Royal Greenland Trade, with its long experience of fixing prices, continued to dominate in the commercial field. In view of this the government deferred setting-up any new export sales corporation, and imposed on her established trading company[3] the tasks she had planned for the visionary one.

In the Commercial Loan Act appended to the Act on Hunting and Fishing Denmark attempted to provide for periods of depression by decreeing that part of the profits which accrued in prosperous years should be retained as a cushion against the hard months of a slump. From 1952 to 1958 Greenland's

[1] Italics author's.

[2] Cf. Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1951, pp. 82 and 98–9.

[3] In the earlier part of this volume the trading company is referred to by the general term, Royal Greenland Trade. In later years it took on additional functions and is more properly called the Royal Greenland Trade Department.

production accounts showed a profit every year save one, and the 800,000 Kr. deficit in that year was immediately cancelled by her Market Equalization Fund, or K-fond, as it was generally called (Christiansen, 1959, p. 324). The 1950 decade, however, was a period of almost world-wide expansion, and while on that occasion the K-fond showed itself capable of stabilizing Greenland's economy through a slump that lasted only a few months, it would seem to a layman very doubtful whether it could ever accumulate sufficient capital to shield the island from a depression that continued over four or five years, especially if that depression engulfed other countries around the North Atlantic. Probably it was never intended to counter such an emergency, but only to correct small annual irregularities in the swing of Greenland's economic pendulum.

3. Trade Act, 1950

This act resolved the long conflict between trade and administration which had muddied the waters of Denmark's long rule (cf. pp. 48, and 89–90) by divorcing them absolutely one from the other and constituting each a separate organization under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister.

The same act gave effect to another recommendation of the 1948 Royal Commission, namely, that Denmark should not abruptly terminate all her trading activities in Greenland and expose the island's inexperienced inhabitants to the ruthless competition of private enterprise before they could find their bearings. The new act prescribed that the state should continue to trade there in order to "safeguard Greenland's supplies of consumer goods and occupational implements and—if required, in association with commercial firms—to purchase, process, and export Greenland products." (Brun, 1961, p. 42).

4. Act respecting Church and Education, and Education Act, 1950

With these two closely related acts the government solved, at least temporarily, another conflict which had rent public opinion in Denmark since the opening of the twentieth century, the conflict as to who should control secular education in Greenland, the national church or the state (see p. 68). Ever since the dawn of the modern scientific age or, more truly perhaps, since the time of Socrates, religion and state have waged a running battle over education, neither being willing to let the other travel its own road unhindered, although in the last analysis they seek the same goal. Greenland, untroubled by conflicting sects since the nineteenth century and only just entering the gates to science and learning, had stood aloof from the battleground, but now that the technical schools and the University of Copenhagen were opening their doors to her children she could no longer avoid being drawn into the conflict. In any case, it was imperative to reform her educational set-up, because the Church of Greenland possessed neither the funds nor the organization to provide the scientific laboratories, the machine shops, and the many other aids to the new learning that was now indispensable for the island's progress. Furthermore, if Greenland's cleverest students were to proceed to Denmark for advanced education and technical skills, it was highly advisable that they should receive their pre-university and pre-polytechnicon training in schools modelled as closely as possible on the secular schools of the mother country.

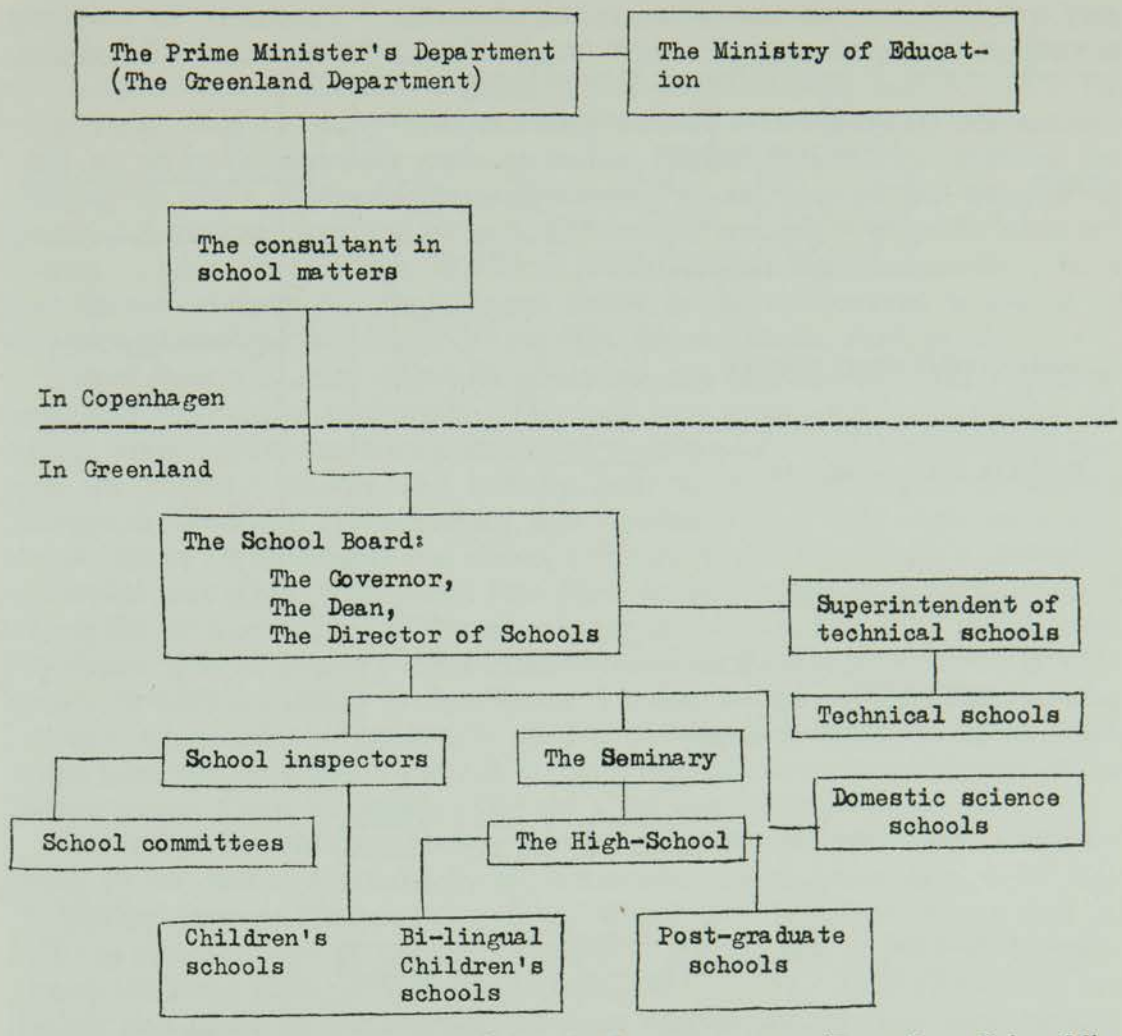

Fig. 7. Administrative organization of the school system, 1954. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 77).

Through its 1950 Church and Education Acts, therefore, Denmark secularized Greenland's education; but instead of divorcing it completely from the Church of Greenland she wisely preserved the historic link between church and school by appointing the head of the island's Lutheran Church, the Dean of Greenland, a member of the new three-man School Board which would supervise all schools in the country, and by retaining practically all the church's catechists who were engaged in actual teaching. Most of these catechists, we must remember, were fluently bilingual, trained in pedagogy as well as in theology, and, being native-born, steeped in the history of the island and the way of life of its inhabitants. To have dismissed any large number of them and attempted to replace them with less qualified Greenlandic teachers, or with teachers from Denmark (had that been possible, which it was not), would have been suicidal, especially at a time when it was very difficult to procure enough qualified teachers to staff the new and larger schools so urgently needed in many districts.

The district school committees presided over by the local Danish or Greenlandic clergymen disappeared automatically when the government abolished the old administrative districts in West Greenland (see p. 118) and replaced

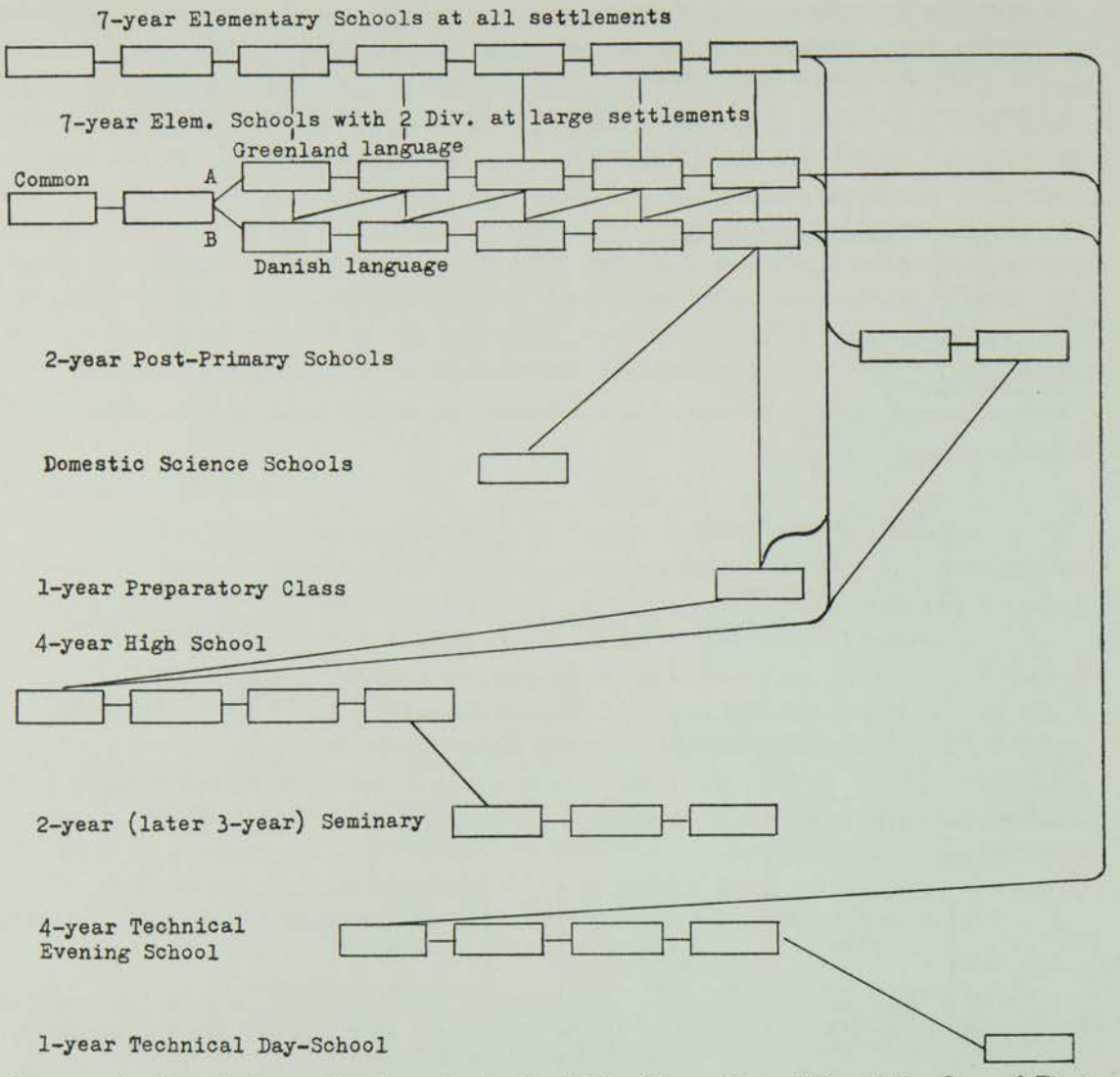

Fig. 8. Pedagogical organization of schools, 1954. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., p. 79).

them for educational purposes with eleven school districts, each supervised by a school inspector appointed for three years by the Ministry for Greenland, on the recommendation of Greenland's new School Board. This inspector, who was usually also the principal of the largest school in the district, joined with the local clergyman, the chairman of the Municipal Council and a second member of that council, to form a school committee, which advised the Director of Education and his School Board in Godthåb concerning the district's problems and needs.

The two acts on education brought other changes. They answered the plea of the Greenlanders for more and better education by upgrading the Godthåb high school so that in four years it could qualify its graduates for the three years' schooling in a Danish gymnasium[1] that gives entrance to a university or polytechnicon; alternatively, it could entitle them to a 2-year teacher-training course at the Godthåb seminary, followed by a year of practical teaching at some rural school in Denmark. The acts also authorized an

[1]There is no gymnasium in Greenland today, and no plans, Mr. N. O. Christensen tells me, to establish one.

extension of vocational training facilities in Greenland by calling for two technical schools, one at Godthåb and the other at Egedesminde, to complement the technical school previously established at Holsteinsborg (see p. 110);[1] by prescribing "home-making" or "domestic science" schools (one was accordingly set up in Egedesminde and a second at Julianehåb); and by ordering the opening of more adult-education classes and an increase in the number of Greenland students sent to Denmark for further training. Godthåb then acquired, in addition to a new technical school, an evening commercial school that trained students for employment either in the commercial world or in Greenland's civil service (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 81).

In addition to better all-round education, the Greenlanders had requested improved instruction in Danish. The new acts responded by ordering the school authorities to undertake, in the very grass-roots of the educational system, the primary schools, and initially only in the four largest settlements Julianehåb, Godthåb, Holsteinsborg, and Egedesminde, a bold experiment that startled many Greenlanders and Danes, although within four years it proved so successful that it was introduced into three more settlements. They decreed that at the commencement of the school year on 1 September 1950[2] the authorities should split all primary-school classes from the third year onward into two groups or lines according to the expressed wishes of the children's parents, an *A* line in which all teaching save in the Danish-language classes would be given in the Greenlandic tongue, and a *B* line in which all classes would be taught in Danish except those for religion and the Greenlandic language.

In 1953, when this revolutionary experiment became fully operative, only about 10 per cent of Greenland's 180 settlements could gather each more than 50 children into its classrooms: roughly 40 per cent contained fewer than 10 children of school age, 20 per cent between 11 and 20, and 30 per cent between 21 and 50 (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 74). Understandably, the quality and scope of the teaching in these smaller schools was very heterogeneous, and it would have been quite impractical to try to make them bilingual. It was only in the larger settlements, therefore, that the government introduced the two parallel lines of teaching. Fortunately, those settlements contained nearly one-half of Greenland's total school population.

The selected schools worked out the prescribed change very smoothly, and the children's knowledge of Danish improved so remarkably that within three or four years the government was able to make Danish the sole language of instruction in the post-primary schools,[3] and to upgrade their teaching to the level of junior high schools. This was not surprising, because it was in the larger settlements that the Greenlanders had become most aware that only

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[1]In 1961–2 these three technical schools, together with a fourth which was established later at Qutdligssat, were teaching boat-building, carpentry, machine shop, mechanics, coopering, iron-work, baking, and physics ('Den grønlandske skole 1961–62', 1963, pp. 50–3). The two domestic science schools offered their 33 students, most of whom had been recruited from the continuation schools, nine months' training in arithmetic, the Greenlandic and Danish languages, diet, cooking, home nursing, needle-work, and skin-and-leather-work. Both the technical and the domestic science schools provided board and lodging, since the majority of their students came from outside places (Jacobson, n.d., p. 13; 'Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland', vol. 2, 1961, p. 54).

[2]Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1951, p. 4. The date seems to have been advanced later to 1 September 1952 (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 79).

[3]Always excepting, of course, in classes on religion and the Greenlandic language.

persons who spoke and wrote Danish fluently could hope to obtain and hold the better jobs in the government's administrative and trade services; and the majority of parents in those settlements naturally insisted that their children should follow the *B* line in the primary schools and profit by the advantage it offered them.

The 1950 legislation brought West Greenland's school system so closely into line with that of Denmark herself that we need give little space to the curricula in the various schools. Theoretically, any primary or secondary school from one of the larger settlements in Greenland can be transplanted to Danish soil, and enrol Danish children into its classes, without modifying its curriculum beyond exempting Danish children from attending its Greenlandic classes. On the other hand, in small settlements where the pupils number only ten or fifteen, school may be held in the local chapel (hence the name "chapel schools" sometimes applied to them), and the pupils may be taught by a catechist without pedagogical training; there the instruction falls below that in Danish country schools and the curriculum is more restricted and haphazard. West Greenland has suffered, and still suffers, from a shortage of well-trained teachers, despite every effort to remedy this weakness. She recruits as many as she can from Denmark, engaging them for two-year terms; but applicants are few and the turnover heavy. The Godthåb high school, which taught 200 boys and girls in 1964, hoped to accept 150 more pupils in 1965, if the new building under construction is completed in time; and it anticipated that an increasing number of its students would enter the seminary for teacher-training. But no one can foresee when the supply of teachers will catch up with the demand, since the new schools that are springing up drain away many of the graduating teachers, and the remainder barely suffices to replace the yearly losses in older schools.

Fourteen years have now passed since the 1950 reorganization, and Greenlandic remains the official language of the country, employed in all church services and government proclamations, and taught in all schools from the primary to the high school; but in West Greenland Danish is now the principal, in post-primary schools almost the sole, language of instruction, and that part of the island, the part which contains over 90 per cent of its population, is fast becoming bilingual. Indeed, there can be very few West Greenlanders today, and in another generation there probably will be none, who lack at least a smattering of Danish; and a considerable number (10–15 per cent in 1961) already speak that language almost as fluently as their native tongue. In the Thule district, however, and in East Greenland, its diffusion is proceeding more slowly. The combined population of those two areas (3,063 in 1961) is so small, and its possibilities of expansion so limited, that the government provides only primary schools and sends unusually promising pupils to the west coast for higher education. North and East Greenland curricula make the teaching of Danish compulsory, but the children are much less exposed to that tongue than their western cousins and consequently trail far behind. Nevertheless, they too are gradually being "indoctrinated", and in the course of time, no doubt, will become bilingual also.

This raises a question that is already exercising the minds of people in Greenland, Denmark, and also in North America. Can the Eskimo language,

of which Greenlandic is a dialect, survive the pressure of European tongues, Danish in Greenland, English in northern Canada and Alaska, and Russian in eastern Siberia? With this question goes a second. Are the white men, the *kablunait*, who now rule the Arctic, deliberately and ruthlessly weighting the scales against the survival of the Eskimo tongue by making one or other European language the sole—or in Greenland the principal—medium of instruction in all schools?

These are not easy questions. Throughout history language has followed the flag, and most conquering nations have tried to impose their own languages over the length and breadth of their dominions and to destroy, or at least to submerge, all alien tongues that might serve as the instruments of sedition and revolt.[1] In every part of the world nationalism and a separate language tend to join forces, as Italy is learning in her Tyrol. More than a thousand years ago the Arabic peoples who spread the Islamic religion and Byzantine culture over the southern shores of the Mediterranean hurled back to its northern shores the Indo-European tongues which had leaped over the sea from southern Europe; and during the last quarter-century they have been expelling them a second time, the French and Spanish languages from Morocco, French from Algeria and earlier from Syria, and Italian from Tripolitania and Libya. Even in the Arctic a pseudo-nationalism sprang up among a few West Greenland youths after the Second World War, and gleaned a measure of encouragement from half a dozen carefully selected Canadian Eskimos who visited their settlements in the summer of 1958, with the blessing of both the Danish and the Canadian authorities. For two or three years afterwards these young Greenlanders talked of an Eskimo-speaking nation which would stretch one day right across the Arctic from Greenland to Bering Strait; but now they have forgotten that idle dream, apparently, for the great majority of their people wisely recognize their mixed ancestry and prefer to be called not Eskimos, but Greenlanders.

Hundreds of languages have died out in the course of human history, and so far as that history reveals, the world has suffered little or no loss. We too often forget that a language, like gold, is merely a tool: it possesses no intrinsic value, and might be discarded if men could develop a more perfect tool.[2] Moreover, it is a tool that is forever changing, like man himself. No Englishman would understand Chaucer if he suddenly emerged from his grave tomorrow and recited his "Caunterbury Tales" outside the famous cathedral; and, similarly, only with great difficulty would today's West Greenlanders understand the speech of their forefathers whom Hans Egede converted to Christianity less than two hundred and fifty years ago. No generation speaks exactly the same as the preceding one, for its language, like a river, keeps moving on. As the old philosopher shrewdly remarked, "You cannot step into the same river twice".

[1]The ancient Persians were a notable exception, and their empire, like the empire of Alexander the Great a century later, quickly fell apart.

[2]If the "radio signals" which appear to be reaching our earth from outer space really come, as some astronomer-physicists have surmised, from living creatures or sentient beings of which we have otherwise no knowledge, dare we postulate that they employ a means of communication similar to our speech, rather than some other method as "supernatural" to us today as television would have seemed to our nineteenth century grandparents?

In a very true sense, therefore, you cannot preserve a living language. It will change in grammar, in vocabulary, and in pronunciation, despite academic conservationists who try to check its waywardness. Speech is simply man's most satisfactory way of communicating his thoughts to those fellow-men with whom he comes most often into contact; and in the case of the Greenlanders, and of the Eskimos of the American Arctic, those fellow-men are becoming more and more people of non-Eskimo descent. Now a language will rust, and sooner or later disappear, unless it is used very frequently, whatever legislators and romanticists may do to "preserve" it; and if it is not needed, it will not be used. That is the dilemma which confronts the authorities in Eire who are attempting to revive Gaelic, and of today's rulers in New Delhi who seek to impose the Hindi language on the millions of Madrasi and Tamil peoples of southern India.

Neither in the American Arctic nor in Greenland have the white men attempted to suppress the Eskimo language. In Alaska, and in arctic Canada, they have tolerated it while endeavouring to superimpose their own language and culture. In Greenland Denmark has tried to impose her own unquestionably superior culture, and has seen her efforts crowned with far greater success than the English-speaking nations—for one reason, of course, because she began more than a century earlier. Unlike her western neighbours, on the other hand, she has laboured from the beginning to preserve the Greenlandic tongue, and to foster in it a genuine literature that would express the thoughts and aspirations of the Greenland people. In this also she has succeeded, as we observed on earlier pages (51, 69), even though we must admit that the Greenlandic literature is still embryonic and in a world perspective of little significance.[1] Today the Greenlanders are a self-supporting people who have emerged from their isolation and joined the Atlantic community, where their language, as they have already discovered, is unknown and useless. They realize, too, that outside their own country it will always be useless. Under these circumstances whether they will strive to retain it into an indefinite future we must leave to their own decision. As one of their own poets has said, "the road to [Greenlandic] literature must pass through the learning of Danish." (Nielsen, 1961, p. 77). For many years to come, perhaps, they will elect bilingualism.

5. National Health Act, 1951

This act reaffirmed and strengthened the fundamental principle which had underlain the government's health program from the very beginning, namely, that as far as possible every Greenlander should receive, free of charge, the best medical and dental care that the authorities could supply. It called for a continuation and expansion of the existing health services, the provision of more doctors and nurses, an increase in the number of hospitals and the enlargement of some of those already operating, a vigorous campaign against tuberculosis, including the building of more sanatoria, and a rapid speed-up of the government's building program in order to abolish the substandard dwellings which blocked the control of that disease (cf. Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1950, pp. 20–2).

[1]The reader will find a brief but excellent summary of Greenlandic literature in Nielsen, 1961.

One provision was new. The act prescribed that a senior official of the Department of National Health in Denmark be appointed Chief Medical Supervisor of the Greenland Health Service, thereby giving the Danish department full control, and aligning the Greenland service with the services in Denmark's own counties and in the Faroe Islands.

6. Act on the Administration of Justice in Greenland, 1951

The Act on the Administration of Greenland passed by the Danish parliament in 1925 had upheld the two concurrent systems of law which had prevailed in earlier years, one for native Greenlanders and one for resident Danes; and it had retained the subjection of the government's judicial arm to the administrative by requiring the governor's approval of all sentences for serious crimes. The act continued in force throughout the war, so that as matters stood in 1948:

> "The administration of justice in Greenland vests in the so-called District Courts presided over by the District Manager appointed by the Provincial Governor. In minor criminal cases, the so-called summary cases, the District Manager is assisted by two lay assessors, one Dane and one Greenlander, and in more serious criminal cases by two Danish and two Greenlandic lay assessors. Also in civil cases instituted against persons under Greenland jurisdiction, the District Court will be the proper court even if the plaintiff is a person subject to Danish law. In civil action in which both parties are subject to Greenland law, the Municipal Council of the municipality in which the defendant resides shall act as a Court of Conciliation, but if no compromise can be attained the case must be brought before the District Court for adjudication.
>
> "No appeal will lie from a judgment of a District Court in a civil case. Nor will any appeal lie from sentences passed by the District Court in criminal or summary cases.
>
> "No judgment by which a person has been sentenced for a grave punishable action or crime, can, however, be executed until it has been submitted to the Provincial Governor for approval. The Provincial Governor has, however, no right to adjudicate the case.
>
> "In Greenland no distinction exists between the judicature and the executive authority, but this question as well as the question of a modernization of the entire legal system of Greenland and of the administration of justice have been taken up for consideration and in the course of the years 1948-1949 detailed investigations will be made in these respects.
>
> "As far as the administration of the northernmost settlement, Thule, in North Greenland is concerned, this settlement is for purposes of administration under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Governor of North Greenland, but the population of Thule has neither a municipal council nor a district council, nor is it represented in the North Greenland Provincial Council . . . .
>
> "As regards Eastern Greenland special administrative regulations for the settlements of Angmagssalik and Scoresby Sound were introduced in September 1947." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, pp. 8–9).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Denmark had applied to Greenland the definitions of crimes set forth in her own Criminal Code; but because the island's natives were still painfully groping their way towards civilization she had refrained from imposing on them the penalties that her code prescribed for those crimes. Consequently, right down to the Second World War, the colony's judges could cite no rules to guide them except the body of decisions which had accumulated over the years, many, perhaps most of them, gathered together on Rink's initiative. The Act of 1925 had failed to separate the judicial authority from the executive, so that the Danish Settlement Manager who handled all the trade in his community could also be the District Manager,

and in that capacity President of the District Court and both prosecutor and judge of his own customers. Was it not inevitable that the interests of trade should sometimes override those of justice?

So the two legal systems, based on a distinction between native Greenlanders and settlers of Danish descent, satisfied no one, and during the war period the movement to abolish them gained so much headway that the government in Copenhagen was forced to take notice. It dared not lightly brush the agitation aside lest it generate ill-feeling and unrest; but it hesitated to extend all the provisions of its own Criminal Code to Greenland without a thorough investigation, knowing how unique was the region's physical environment and how vastly different the histories of its two races.[1] Accordingly, in 1949, it directed a small committee of sociologists to visit the colony, examine the situation closely, and advise it what legal changes seemed necessary.

The committee reached its decisions very quickly. It unanimously agreed that the time had come when native Greenlanders and Danish settlers in Greenland should enjoy equal status under the law, and it recommended that a panel of jurists should draw up a special Criminal Code for the island which would take into account, more adequately than could the code of the mother country, its peculiar geographical setting and cultural development. The new code, it declared, should not aim to punish criminals, nor merely to deter other persons from committing similar offences, but rather to "re-socialize" the offenders so that in due course they might return to their homes and become once more useful and desirable members of their communities. Behind its recommendations lay the theory that crime is a kind of social disease possessing physiological or mental roots, in some cases both; whence the committee logically deduced that every criminal code ought to seek two objectives and two only, namely, the protection of society, and the cure and rehabilitation of the criminal.

The jurists who drew up Greenland's new Criminal Code tried to carry out these two purposes. They deliberately threw overboard the doctrine *Nulla poena sine lege* ("no punishment not sanctioned by law") which had rooted itself in most of Europe during the nineteenth century and coloured one or two minor regulations that Denmark had laid down for Greenland, and they flatly rejected any notion of punishment (*straf*) for crime and refrained from even mentioning the word, using in its place another Danish word, *foranstaltning*, which is usually translated "measures", but in the code they drew up corresponds more closely to our "sentences", provided we eliminate from that term the sinister connotation generally associated with it. The code defines as "crimes" exactly the same acts as are so defined in the Danish code, but the "sentences" it prescribes for them reflect the ancient ways and thoughts of the Greenlanders and codify what had been customary since the days of Rink, if not earlier. It is the "sentences" alone, then, which differentiate the new Greenland code from the Danish one. Nevertheless, the difference is highly significant, for it reveals, as clearly perhaps as any other feature in Greenland's administration, the enlightened humanity of Danish rule.

[1]Cf. ". . . at the joint meeting of the Provincial Councils in 1948. The councils at this meeting passed a resolution to the effect that they could not recommend that Danish law in its entirety was introduced in Greenland. On the other hand, the Provincial Councils wished that endeavours should be made towards an abolition of the difference in respect of status between Danes and Greenlanders, by the introduction of one system of law common to all persons staying in Greenland." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, pp. 7–8).

Denmark's parliament approved the new code in 1951, and at the same time reorganized Greenland's judiciary, which it now separated entirely from the executive arm of government by empowering the Justice Department in Copenhagen to appoint and station in Godthåb a fully trained judge who, aided by two laymen appointed every four years by the Greenland Provincial Council, would handle all serious cases that came directly to his attention or were referred to him by the lower courts in the territories of the local councils. In consultation with the Governor of Greenland he was to appoint as Justice of the Peace within each of these territories some respected Greenlander who could speak both Eskimo and Danish; and the local government was to elect two laymen to act with him, constituting a lower court that would pass judgement in minor cases and refer more serious ones to the judge in Godthåb. Greenlanders and Danes living in Greenland were to be treated alike, and both the Greenlandic and the Danish languages might be used in the law-courts, which were open to the public. The decisions of the Godthåb judge would be final as far as Greenland was concerned, since the Governor of the island, being now the Public Prosecutor, would lose his earlier power to review them. However, dissatisfied litigants could carry their cases from the Godthåb judge to the Court of Appeal in Denmark, and from that court to the Supreme Court; or they might approach the Supreme Court directly.

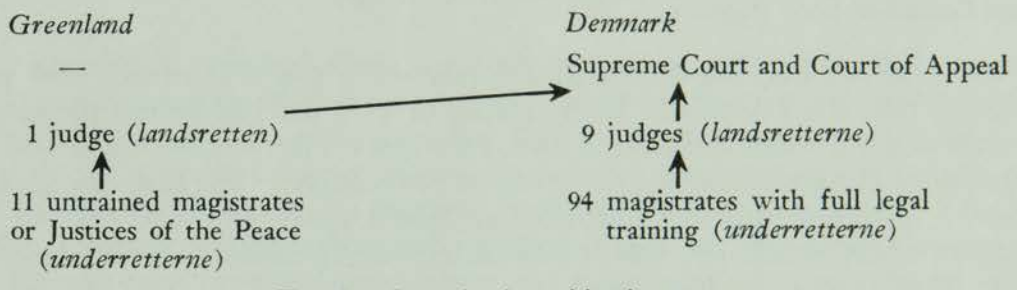

Fig. 9. Organization of justice, 1951.

After thus re-organizing Greenland's judiciary the Act on the Administration of Justice proceeded to lay down regulations governing confiscation, searches, arrests, and detentions of persons. These corresponded in principle with the provisions of the related act in Denmark itself.

Such is the organization of justice in Greenland today. The Justices of the Peace, unlike the Danish magistrates who bear the same title *underretterne*, are totally untrained in law and legal procedures, but for two or three days each year they undergo indoctrination from the judge in Godthåb. In the summer of 1964 a distinguished Judge of Denmark's Supreme Court, together with a Judge of its Court of Appeal, visited Greenland on circuit, and these two officials held an indoctrination course in Julianehåb for all the eleven Justices of the Peace on Greenland's west coast.[1]

7. Amendments to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark (1953)

With the passage of the Act on the Administration of Justice in Greenland, Denmark completed the laying of the blocks for the new political and social

[1]For further details on the administration of justice in Greenland see Appendix to this chapter.

structure she was giving her colony. All that she now needed was the keystone to bind those blocks together, i.e. an act of incorporation into Denmark which would bring about a complete partnership between Greenlanders and Danes. Before we move on to that act, however, let us recapitulate what Denmark had already accomplished.

She had:

1. Divided Greenland into two parts:
   (a) the undeveloped regions of North and East Greenland, regions difficult of access, poor in resources, and inhabited only by a few hundred natives who were gaining a precarious living from hunting; and
   (b) West Greenland, accessible throughout the whole year, abounding in fish, and inhabited at that time by 20,000–25,000 natives whose manner of life resembled that of the fishing populations in northern and western Europe.
2. Given West Greenland semi-autonomy and a government analogous to that of a county in Denmark.
3. Abolished the 200-year-old quarantine of the island and loosened her trade monopoly by opening West Greenland to Danish, but not foreign, private enterprise.
4. Separated West Greenland's trade from its administration.
5. Separated the administration's executive and judicial functions.
6. Removed the control of West Greenland's educational system from the Church of Greenland to secular authorities, and aligned the system with Denmark's.
7. Abolished all legal distinction beween Greenlanders of Eskimo or part-Eskimo descent and Greenland-born Danes.

With all her building-blocks thus firmly set in place, Denmark now proceeded to raise the keystone. In the spring of 1953 she laid before parliament the draft of a bill which introduced two *Amendments to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark;* and she requested its ratification. The first amendment, in Sec. 1, provided that the Constitution should apply to every part of the Kingdom of Denmark, i.e., that it should include Greenland; and the second, in Sec. 28 of the Constitution, read:

> "The Folketing [Parliament] shall consist of one assembly of not more than one hundred and seventy-nine Members, of whom two Members shall be elected on the Faroe Islands, and two Members in Greenland." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 13).

Parliament ratified the two amendments without delay, and the Danish people approved them in a referendum shortly afterwards. The revised Constitution entered into force on 5 June 1953, and on September 3 of that year the Prime Minister notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations that Greenland, previously a non-self-governing territory, had become an integral part of the Danish Realm of Denmark. Accordingly,

> ". . . Denmark's obligation in accordance with Article 73(e) of The United Nations' Charter to submit annual reports to the Secretary General on social, economic and educational conditions in Greenland must be considered to have ceased." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 1).

In that same autumn West Greenland went to the polls and elected two Members to Denmark's parliament, which had just conferred on her a status and a constitution similar to those of a Danish county. The long journey was ended. After being Denmark's ward for more than 200 years she was now a fully accepted member of Denmark's family.

As yet, however, only West Greenland. But the inhabitants of North and East Greenland, were striding not far behind. Sixty years of Danish rule had abolished illiteracy among them also, and their cousins in West Greenland were cheering them on. In front of them shone the promise of Denmark's Prime Minister to the United Nations:

> "it has not as yet been possible to extend suffrage to the Danish Parliament to the very thinly populated areas of North and East Greenland. This will, however, be done, as soon as technical facilities make it possible to do so. As mentioned above, the populations of these areas participate in local government through their representatives on the Hunters' Council and the District Councils." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 16).

Appendix to Chapter 6

Greenland's Criminal Code has now run the gauntlet of its first ten years with remarkable success, and we may ask ourselves whether this success derives from the wisdom of its provisions and their perhaps fortuitous suitability to a very peculiar environment, or from the unusual character of the people who live in that environment; or perhaps from both causes combined. That the environment is peculiar no one will question; and it has long seemed to me that the Eskimo race, isolated for centuries and indeed millennia in a region where darkness or twilight enveloped them for almost half the year, and the cold drove them to shelter in huts so small that the inmate who stretched out his arm could hardly fail to touch his neighbour—this race has intensified certain traits which peoples of more temperate climes have largely sublimated, and has passed them on to the Greenlanders. One is a cheerfulness that buoys them up in adversity; another is a fatalism that keeps them marching when the road is rough; and a third is a sense of unity with their immediate neighbours, a social sense that breeds a tolerance of each other's peculiarities, and an ability to live and work, like the ants and the bees, in communities so tightly knit that they would shatter the nerves and tempers of Europeans forced to become members of them.

Whether or not this theory is correct, it may be worth while to interrupt our narrative briefly and examine in some detail the workings of Greenland's Criminal Code since 1951.

Before and during the Second World War Greenland lacked any police to enforce a Criminal Code, or any government officer to search out offenders and hale them before some legally appointed judge. Rink's Boards of Guardians, and the local Councils which succeeded them, could delegate some person to bring an offender into their presence, but that was a mandate for a specific occasion which bestowed no authority on the delegate to search out and arrest

other offenders. Nor was there any jail before the Second World War. The aboriginal society itself had never evolved the policy of incarcerating criminals in a strongly guarded prison especially constructed to isolate them from their fellows. It needed the services of every hunter, good or bad, to preserve the communities from starvation, and any man of anti-social tendencies, any hunter who neglected to contribute his share, might justifiably be killed or driven into the wilderness. The Arctic of early days had no room for idle hands.

Today conditions have changed, Greenland is marching with the rest of the civilized world, and urbanization is proceeding apace, attended by its usual benefits and ills. The committee of sociologists which visited the island in 1949 felt that the social revolution needed new controls, and recommended the creation of a small police force partly composed of Danish officers, since no Greenlanders had received as yet the necessary training. When she reorganized the judiciary, therefore, Denmark authorized the creation of a ten-man police body, five of them Danes and five Greenlanders, and she appointed the Governor of Greenland head of the force and public prosecutor, subject to the Director of Public Prosecution in Copenhagen. Today (1964) all or nearly all the police are Greenlanders who have formally applied for enrolment in this branch of the civil service, undergone a preliminary examination which tested their ability to speak both Greenlandic and Danish, then trained in their homeland for two years before completing their probation with a year in Denmark.[1]

Europeans have commonly considered the Eskimos a very law-abiding race, because through the ages nature in the shape of an extremely rigorous environment socialized them and made them highly sensitive to public opinion. Nothing escaped notice in their little communities; each individual's character and conduct were patent to all. The modern Greenlanders have inherited this social trait of their ancestors, judging by their 200-year record under Danish rule. They have always lived in small groups, of course, and we know from our own rural communities that small, rather isolated groups generally live out their allotted span in undisturbed peace and harmony, at least outwardly. Whether the peaceful character of the Greenlanders can withstand the temptations, the strains, the clamour and the restlessness of our modern urban existence has not as yet been tested; but should the population of Godthåb, or any other settlement, increase to 8,000 or 10,000, as may well happen before many years, and unemployment in its vicinity become endemic, its social life may well become less tranquil and the laws less strictly observed. Even now the frequency of alcoholism and of juvenile delinquency suggests that this may already have begun; but opinions on the subject differ so widely that the true situation will not become apparent until the fog lifts. Meanwhile Greenland's new Criminal Code can be trusted to deal with present-day conditions and, with some minor amendments dictated by experience, to cope satisfactorily with future developments.

[1]Cf. "The regular police force is of comparatively recent date in Greenland, but a legal administration has now been established. If you lose a glove on the road at Godthaab, you may call for it at the Lost Property Office of the police station. To drive one of the comparatively few cars in the town, you must hold a valid driving licence and be sober; otherwise, you may find yourself detained in the local gaol together with drunken persons from the public bar. If there is to be a trial you will be brought before the local court with lay judges. Your case may be appealed to a superior court, and even to Denmark, for final decision." (Borum, 1961, pp. 95–6).

Table 13. Major convictions under the Greenland Criminal Code, 1954–7[1] (in percentages of all convictions).

Offence	*Greenland 1954–7*	*Denmark 1956–8*
Theft	33.7	44.6
Assault	17.8	7.3
Abuse of alcohol	5.0	?
Damage to property	4.8	0.6
Sexual relations with juveniles	2.7	2.8
Knowingly spreading venereal disease	3.8	0.1
Disturbance of the peace	7.5	0.3
Embezzlement, fraud	2.7	13.2
Receiving stolen goods	0.9	5.4
Other offences	21.0	?
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*

This table cannot be properly interpreted without some consideration of the background of the modern Greenlanders.

Theft is still the commonest offence, as it is in all capitalist countries, and perhaps in some non-capitalist ones as well. Most cases involve nothing more than petty pilfering from trading stores, or from ships that are being loaded or discharged. Breaking and entering, robbery with violence, and indeed violence of any kind, occur but rarely. What varieties of offence, therefore, justice has included under the term "assault" I do not know. In the communalistic life of pre-European times the word would have suggested the not uncommon cases when an outraged husband blackened his wife's eyes—or she his; but the frequency of assaults attested by the table, 17.8 per cent of all criminal offences,

[1]Condensed from 'Kriminalloven og de Vestgrønlandske Samfund', 1962, vol. 1, Table 4, p. 63. Judging from a similar table of crimes compiled for the period 1882 to 1911, criminality in Greenland has not changed significantly during the last eighty years, either in its nature or in its frequency relative to the size of the population. Here is the earlier table, taken from Lindow, 1929, p. 24:

Criminal cases from 1882 to 1911

Offence	*No. of cases*
Theft	56
Forgery	6
Fraud	4
Robbery	3
Misappropriation of trust money	1
Abuse of public funds	1
Unlawful use of property found	2
Destruction of property	16
Reckless shooting of reindeer	1
Violence	20
Taking the law into one's own hand	7
Transgression of administrative rules	28
False depositions before guardians	2
Immoral conduct	14
Abortion	2
Delivery under concealment of pregnancy	5
Infanticide	2
Adultery	5
Incest	3
Murder	3
Manslaughter	2

seems to require a broader interpretation. In early days serious quarrels between men, sometimes too between women, might be settled with knives—a quick stab in the stomach that nearly always proved fatal; but if an offence of that nature should occur in this present age the offender would be charged with murder or attempted murder, not with simple assault.[1]

Third on the list is a new crime, "abuse of alcohol", which civilization has never failed to excite among primitive peoples. The percentage of convictions for its abuse might suggest that in Greenland, as in many other countries, drunkenness has become a serious social problem; but this is hardly true at the present time, although it may well become very serious if urbanization accelerates. The police in Godthåb do indeed assert that it has contributed more than any other factor to the increased number of misdemeanours and crimes in that 'metropolis'; but we must not forget that today Godthåb attracts many more Danish workers than other places during the summer months, workers who receive higher wages than the native Greenlanders, and for that and other reasons tend to form an upper crust which inevitably arouses resentment. Chronic alcoholism occurs nowhere, or is so rare that it is negligible, for Danish liquor, though freely purchasable in the ordinary trading store, is very heavily taxed and therefore expensive, while the beer which the Greenlanders brew from imported hops and malt contains so little alcohol, as a rule, that it is relatively harmless. In any case the Greenlanders are not heavy drinkers: they indulge in alcohol only on special occasions, or when they have company; and its purchase makes but a very small dint in their yearly incomes. It may be true that in recent months Greenland's population has been spending on liquor more money per capita than in earlier years; but we cannot deduce from this a larger consumption. Indeed, if we exclude home-brew, which naturally refuses to yield any statistics, the quantity of liquor now being consumed has declined a little, although it is still appreciably higher per capita than in Denmark. Considering that alcoholic beverages became freely available to Greenlanders only in 1954, after the island acquired the status of a Danish province, most authorities are prepared to tolerate the present consumption rate, since there is no evidence that it is promoting the spread of venereal diseases, and only in Godthåb any increase in the crime rate. Yet a few well-informed people are alarmed, among them the island's medical staff, which believes that alcoholism substantially contributes to the very high accident rate;[2] and a youth temperance movement emanating from Denmark is vigorously combatting the drinking of any kind of alcohol, with what success is disputed. One thing appears certain: there is no audible outcry at this time in favour of rationing liquor, or of restricting its circulation by other measures.[3]

The fifth and sixth item in our table require some elucidation. In the old Greenland life, and for many years after that life had broken down and the people had accepted Christianity, boys and girls generally married as soon as the former proved themselves capable hunters and the latter efficient housewives—the boys, that is to say, at the age of 16 or 17 and the girls at 13 or 14—

[1] In the four years from 1957 to 1960, "Murder or assault resulting in death was committed six times and more than 150 cases of assault of a less dangerous character occurred, most frequently as a result of intoxication." ('Sundhedstilstanden i Grønland' for 1961, p. 77).

[2] Cf. 'Sundhedstilstanden i Grønland' for 1961, p. 80.

[3] Cf. 'Alkoholsituationen i Vestgrønland', 1961, pp. 137–41.

furthermore, the lack of all privacy in their tents, snow huts and one-roomed stone-and-sod dwellings destroyed every mystery in sex and created in their society a tolerance of fleeting relations, even among children, which we are taught to condemn. A little of this outlook seems to have come down to the present-day Greenlanders, permitting them to condone a greater freedom in sexual relations than we sanction—a freedom that concerns itself very little with the statutory age of consent, which the new Criminal Code, following the Danish code, sets at 15 years.[1] Two centuries ago many of today's minors would have been young but dignified matrons, proud of their adult status and bravely struggling to prepare all the meals for their little households, fabricate all the clothing from the skins their husbands brought back from their hunting, and perform the hundred and one other tasks that fall to the lot of women in even the most primitive societies.

The item "Knowingly spreading venereal disease" is another import of civilization taken from the Danish code, for neither gonorrhoea nor syphilis were known in Greenland before the coming of the white man. Gonorrhoea has been endemic for many years; but syphilis, which gained a foothold at Arsuk in 1872 and was immediately stamped out (see p. 71), was re-introduced immediately after the Second World War and, though recently stamped out again, still causes grave concern. Whaling crews carried this disease to arctic Alaska and arctic Canada during the nineteenth century, and may conceivably have taken it to Greenland a century earlier. If they did, however, it must have died out very rapidly, for the old Danish writers seem not to mention it.

The vicious host of frauds, larcenies, embezzlements and other noxious plants that poison our western civilization find infertile soil in Greenland, where banks are still novelties in many places and stocks and shares mere scraps of useless paper. Crimes of that nature must await the deeper rooting of our vaunted culture that lies perhaps just around the corner.

Having noted now the principal "crimes" which occurred in Greenland between 1954 and 1957, let us consider the sentences that were imposed on the convicted "criminals" during the same three years.

Table 14. Sentences pronounced in 1954–7.[2]

Sentence	*No. of cases*	*Percentage of all convictions*
Prison in Godthåb	1	less than 1
Alcohol prohibited	24	6
Medical treatment	2	less than 1
Compulsory education	6	2
Compulsory labour	9	4
Restriction on movements within home settlement	3	1
Banishment to another settlement	14	4
Placed under supervision or guard	20	4
Fine	227	56
Reprimand	48	15

[1]Hence the very high percentage of illegitimacy today in Greenland, and indeed throughout the entire American Arctic.

[2]Condensed from Tables 22 and 23 in 'Kriminalloven og de Vestgrønlandske Samfund', vol. 1, 1962, pp. 88, 89.

The death penalty is absent from this list, for Greenland follows Denmark in forbidding it, even for murder. The sternest penalty that can be imposed is imprisonment for life, and that only after a medical examination which attests insanity. If the examination fails to attest insanity the sentence must be reviewed.

At the present time there is only one jail in Greenland, a wooden house in Godthåb that would escape attention as an ordinary dwelling were it not surrounded with a high, chicken-wire fence. It contains bunks for only six prisoners, who work by day at tasks assigned them in the town and immure themselves in the jail again at 6 p.m. Now that the increased tempo of life in Godthåb and one or two other large settlements seems to be breeding more crime, and crime, too, of a more serious character, the authorities have been pondering the advisability of erecting a larger jail of brick; but one hopes this will not be necessary.[1]

Greenlanders look upon a jail sentence as a heavy disgrace: one may compare it, roughly, with public exposure all day in the stocks of Merry England. Much more severe, however, is banishment to some settlement far from home. Greenland possesses the great advantage over Denmark that undetected escape is well-nigh impossible, so that a criminal who has been banished to a distant settlement may safely be allowed full freedom of movement in his temporary home.

Fines make up more than half the sentences, reprimands and warnings come second, and prohibitions against drinking alcohol third. In the last we may see the anxiety of the authorities to check any tendency of the Greenlanders to abuse their recently acquired liberty of purchasing and consuming as much liquor as they wish—or can afford, for the taxes on alcohol are very high. Vigilance against drunkenness is probably the main task of the police, of whom at least one is stationed in every important settlement in West Greenland, but not in East or North Greenland, where crime is almost unknown.

Because criminals are not excluded from participation in the general life of their communities Greenland has not needed yet to face the problem of their rehabilitation. That, however, may come later as her communities grow larger, money and banking strengthen their grip, and trade and commerce occupy a more important place in the daily life. Then the love of money and of the baubles that money buys may root itself more deeply, and inspire in Greenland the same depravity and crimes as blacken the face of every human civilization, in the east as well as in the west.[2]

[1]Mr. N. O. Christensen informs me that the building is to be erected in 1966–7.

[2]For a general discussion in English of the Greenland Criminal Code, see Steenhoven, G. van den, 'Research report on "Caribou Eskimo Law", Attachment II,' MS. in Library of Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa.

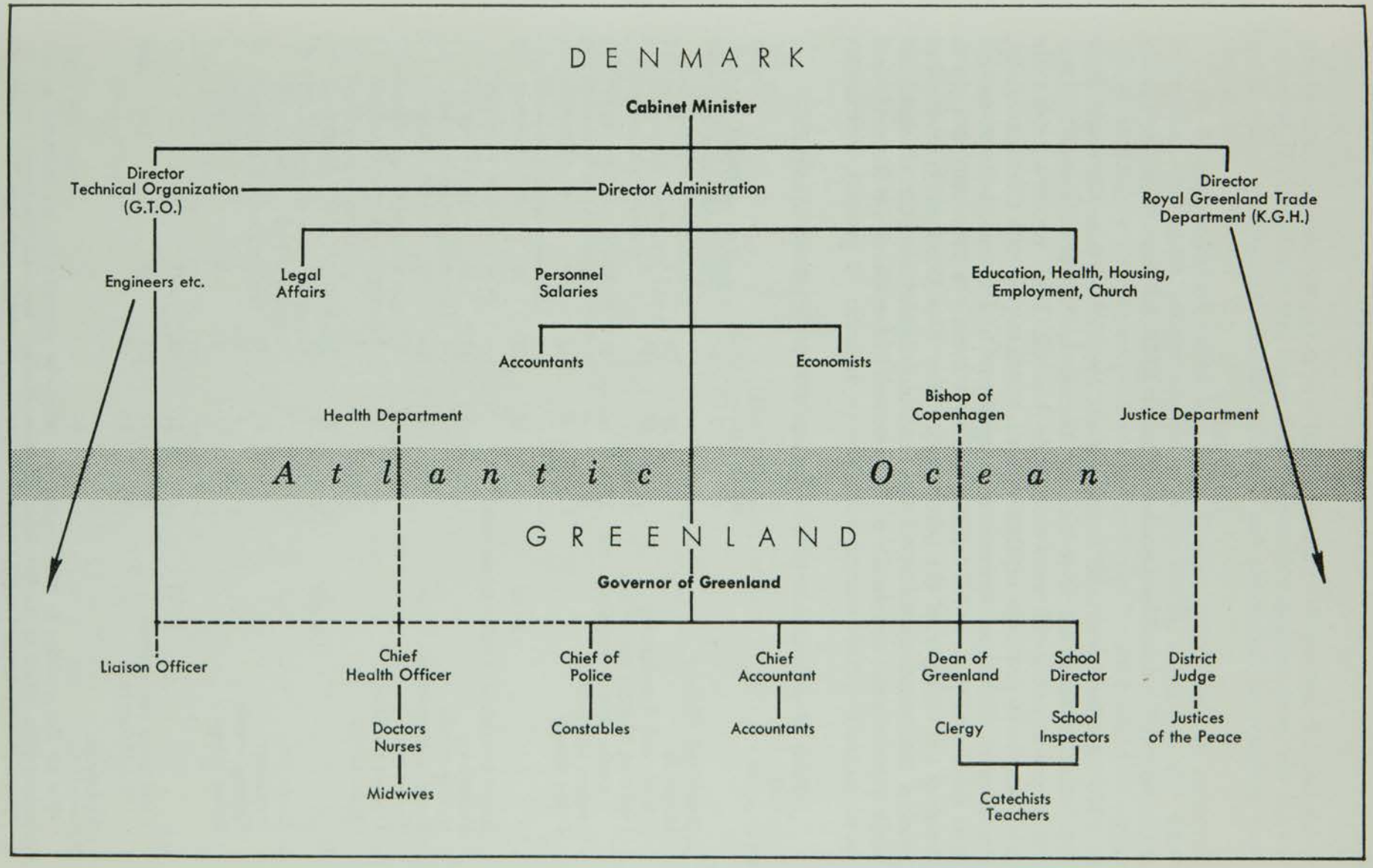

Fig. 10. Organization of the Greenland Ministry, July 1964. Note this figure sets out in detail only the Administrative Branch of the Ministry, not the Branches of Trade and Public Works. Broken lines indicate organizations that collaborate with, but are not subordinate to, the Administration Branch.

CHAPTER 7

The forward march: 1953–64[1]

No imperious command from even the Prophet Mohammed could draw the distant mountain nearer to him; and likewise no legislation passed by Denmark's parliament could remove the wide Atlantic Ocean which separated her from her new province in that ocean's northern waters. Constitutionally, nevertheless, Greenland was now an integral part of Denmark, her poorest and least developed part; and she dared not let it become a cancerous outgrowth draining the strength of the other parts. The 1948 Commission which had sparked the constitutional revolution had investigated also the changes that were occurring in Greenland's population, and had outlined the economic and social measures which seemed necessary to maintain its growth, increase its

Table 15. Government gross investments, 1950–64 (in millions of kroner).[2]

	1950–53	*1954–57*	*1958–61*	*1962*	*Budget 1963*	*Budget 1964*	*Per cent of total*
1. *Greenland Ministry*							
Hospitals	9	21	13	3	0	1	6
Schools and Broadcasting	3	14	14	6	6	8	6
Harbour, Electric and Water works, roads, workshops, etc.	26	36	61	29	41	42	28
Houses for Danes	14	9	27	10	11	15	10
Other things	3	8	12	17	3	3	6
Total	*55*	*88*	*127*	*65*	*61*	*69*	*56*
2. *Royal Greenland Trade Department*							
Factories	4	1	15	10	11	10	7
Salting houses	1	4	4	1	1	0	1
Shops, fuel-tanks etc.	8	8	13	12	5	8	7
Transport	8	8	17	2	9	17	7
Houses for Danes	4	5	4	3	4	3	3
Other things	3	2	3	1	3	6	2
Total	*28*	*28*	*56*	*29*	*33*	*44*	*27*
3. *Loans for*							
Dwellings	7	27	33	10	12	15	13
Fishing vessels	3	3	7	5	4[a]	7[a]	3
Other things	1	1	2	0	1[a]	1[a]	1
Total	*11*	*31*	*42*	*15*	*17*	*23*	*17*
Total gross investments	94	147	225	109	111	136	100
Yearly average	24	37	56				

[a]Estimated.

[1]For all the statistics in this chapter not otherwise accredited I am indebted to Mr. Christian Jensen, Chief of the Economic Division, Ministry for Greenland.

[2]Since 1950 the krone has held a fairly steady rate of 6.9 Kr. = $1 U.S.

production, and raise its rather low living standard. Now that she had safely gathered the island into the home fold, Denmark extracted from her drawer again that Commission's recommendations and proceeded to translate them into action.

Its recommendations called for much heavier investments in economic enterprises, and much greater expenditures on health, education, and other social services, to meet the needs of the increasing population. Without delay, therefore, Denmark began to pour money and men into the island to secure these objectives. In the four years from 1950 to 1953 she had invested there an average sum of 24 million kroner yearly. She now increased that sum, year after year, until by 1962 it reached 110 million kroner (nearly $16 million U.S.), twice the amount per capita, notes Boserup (1963, pp. 478–9), that she was investing in European Denmark, although in value perhaps roughly the same, after we discount Greenland's high transportation charges and the high costs there of construction and other activities. On top of this, she increased the funds for administration, wages, and other running expenses from a yearly average of 28 million kroner in the period 1950–3 to 101 million kroner in 1962 (see Tables 15, 16).[1]

Table 16. Government net operating expenses, 1950–64 (in millions of kroner).

	Yearly average				*Budget*	
	1950–53	*1954–57*	*1958–61*	*1962*	*1963*	*1964*
1. Administration of Justice, Church, Schools, Health, including official housing		26	39	57	60	74
2. Greenland Technical Organization, Copenhagen			2	5	6	7
3. Buildings, and workshops, including the Holsteinsborg shipyard	24	7	5	4	0	0
4. Electric-power, coal-mine, water-supply			3	3	6	5
5. Road and harbour works, fire service, etc.			3	3	3	4
6. Broadcasting, weather and ice-patrol services		2	6	11	14	17
7. Production costs of Royal Greenland Trade Department		—1	2	2	3	6
8. Supply costs of Royal Greenland Trade Department	9	8	8	6	11	10
9. Transportation costs of Royal Greenland Trade Department		2	4	6	8	9
10. Subsidies for housing and industry	—	0	2	3	4	4
11. Other things	—	3	9	6	11	10
Total	*33*	*47*	*83*	*106*	*126*	*146*
Less						
Petty revenues	5	5	5	5	5	5
Total net expenses	*28*	*42*	*78*	*101*	*121*	*141*

[1]The budget of 1964 raised the investment capital for that year to Kr. 136 millions, and expenditures for administration, wages, etc., to Kr. 141 millions.

What did she accomplish with this liberal outpouring of funds?

With the investment capital, she doubled, or nearly doubled, the fish harvest on which West Greenland's prosperity rested—it rose from a yearly average of 21,000 tons between 1950 and 1953 to 41,000 tons in 1961 (Boserup, 1963, p. 484); and she increased her exports of fish products from a yearly average of 6,654 tons between 1953 and 1955 to 11,955 tons in 1962, besides multiplying five-fold her exports of preserved shrimps, a relatively high-priced commodity (Table 17). During the same ten-year period she maintained a

Table 17. Exports of fish products (in tons).

Article	*1953–55 (yearly average)*	*1962*
Cod: salted	5,000	8,200
dried	290	600
fillets, frozen	600	1,820
Wolf-fish: frozen	540	354
Greenland halibut: salted	160	165
frozen	58	306
Salmon: frozen	—	250
Shrimps: frozen	6	260
Shrimps: canned (80 per can)	850,000 cans	4,600,000 cans

steady home-building program, concentrated mainly in the fishing towns of the southwest coast to accommodate the increasing local population and to draw in families from the outposts. Not only did she furnish all the funds for the erection of these new dwellings, many of them large apartment buildings,

Table 18. Dwellings built for Greenlanders, 1952–63.

	In towns	*Outside towns*	*Total*	*Yearly average*
1952–55	671	355	1026	256
1956–59	535	343	878	220
1960–63	805	241	1046	262
Total	*2011*	*939*	*2950*	*245*

but she offered such liberal loans that even a penniless Greenlander could acquire an individual home and, at the same time, perhaps, the new boat and equipment he needed for fishing. Furthermore, she financed the enlargement and renovation of the canneries and freezing plants of the Royal Greenland Trade Department, and the construction of harbour facilities, roads, water supplies, and other works that would help to swell the island's production.

The housing loans carried one or two unusual features. No individual, however indigent, obtained a home free of charge, although it might happen in the end that his municipality extinguished the charge. He signed for a loan, which usually ran for 33 years, might cover up to 100 per cent of the dwelling's value, and carried an interest rate of 5½ per cent that included a small (1½ per cent) amortization of capital; but the government substantially reduced the interest payments in proportion to the size of the man's family.[1] During the 1950's a shortage of building sites, and the economy gained from providing heat, light, water, and garbage systems to large units instead of to widely scattered

[1] A 40 per cent reduction for the first child and 7½ per cent for each extra one, up to five, the maximum reduction being fixed at 77 per cent. Was Denmark unconsciously offering a bonus for big families?

single or double houses, encouraged the construction of apartment blocks, a tendency that is being carried into the 1960's.

The apportionment of the investment funds between the fishing industry, the only industry which could make West Greenland self-supporting, and the building of homes, schools, post-offices, and other structures required by expanding civilized communities, demanded many delicate decisions. It reawakened, indeed, that old problem which had tormented the administration in earlier days, whether trade should come first, or welfare. The fishing industry needed considerable reorganization to meet the changed conditions of the postwar world, and it was not a simple reorganization of the labour conditions in its plants, for Greenland's previously inexperienced workers, most of them women, had adapted themselves amazingly well to the new regime.

> "We did not have any real difficulties in getting the Greenlanders to go in for fishery, when reasonable possibility of gain was offered; or for factory-work, when reasonable working conditions and pay were provided. On the contrary, in our factories we have reached work-efficiency that stands fully on a level with other parts of Denmark." (Christiansen, 1959, translation from p. 327).

What the industry's leaders lamented was the inefficiency of their many small factories irregularly fed by hamlets of fishermen dispersed along a treacherous coast; and on more than one occasion they recommended the concentration of

Table 19. Landings of cod and halibut from Greenland waters, by all countries[1], 1952–62 (in metric tons).

1952	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*	*1961*	*1962*
Cod										
294,000	242,000	302,000	265,000	321,000	269,000	320,000	234,000	243,000	345,000	451,000
Halibut										
573	964	973	1,418	989	1,248	1,265	899	942	831	813

Table 20. Catch of fish, mostly cod, in Greenland waters, 1961 and 1962[1] (in metric tons, round fish).

Country	*1961*	*1962*
W. Germany (trawlers 500–1800 tons)	138,084	191,992
Portugal (trawlers 901–1800 tons, dories 150–1800 tons)	67,752	91,654
Faroe Is. (trawlers 501–900 tons, inshore small boats)	57,694	93,360
France (trawlers 901–1800 tons)	39,624	52,980
Greenland (no trawlers, inshore small boats 0–25 tons)	40,560	40,588
Norway (no trawlers, long liners 151–500 tons)	43,775	32,119
Iceland (trawlers 501–1800 tons)	19,177	5,845
United Kingdom (trawlers 151–1800+ tons)	8,981	17,134
Spain (trawlers 901–1800 tons)	1,332	3,400
Poland (one factory trawler, 1800+ tons, for redfish only)		681
Total	*425,979*	*529,753*

[1]From *Internat. Comm. Northwest Atlantic Fish. Stat. Bull.* vol. 11, 1961, pp. 79–82 and vol. 12, 1962, pp. 7, 9, 74–6. Note that only the Greenlanders and the Faroe Islanders fished within the territorial waters, and that the latter also trawled on the banks. The two tables clearly show the increasing toll which foreign trawlers are taking on the banks, and the necessity for the Greenlanders to modernize their techniques and trawl there also.

both fishermen and factories in the larger towns. They needed also bigger and more automated plants, most of them, owing to a change of taste in the world's markets, equipped for freezing their chief product, cod, instead of salting it, and capable too of operating at every season of the year so that they could compete with West Germany and other rivals whose catch regularly exceeded that of the Greenlanders (cf. Tables 19 and 20).

Assailed with these competing demands for larger shares of the investment funds Denmark's policy-makers needed the courage of David and the wisdom of Solomon. Their dilemma resembled in miniature the problem that perennially recurs in India and in China, namely, how much of their limited foreign capital should they devote to buying wheat from other nations to feed their hungry millions, and how much to the building of cement and fertilizer plants, irrigation works, and other projects which would increase their own food production and save other millions from dying of starvation in later years. Fortunately for Denmark, her problem was small enough, and her finances, she believed, ample enough, to achieve all her objectives contemporaneously, as we shall see in the next chapter. In the 1950's it was the order of attacking them which aroused the most controversy.

Labour for the expansion of Greenland's fishing industry, and for the readjustment and social development of its population, presented another difficult problem. Only Denmark, of course, could supply the top administrative, executive, and professional staffs, and the experts in special fields; but what about the skilled and semi-skilled labourers, the carpenters, plumbers, electricians, machinists, tractor-drivers, and others whom Greenland's vocational schools were supposed to be training? If the number of fully trained Greenlanders was still too limited—as undoubtedly it was—did not the construction activity that was agitating the whole coast provide a golden opportunity for training scores more of them "on the job", and for reducing also the expense of bringing out highly paid workers from Denmark?

There was another face to this coin, however, the face that presented itself to the eyes of the contractors, for most of the work was carried out under contracts. The climate allowed them only from four to six months each year in which to complete their jobs, and with staffs labouring at top speed, inexperienced or half-trained apprentices could cause serious delays.

Table 21. Employment in Greenland, 1 January 1963.[1]

	Danes	*Greenlanders*
Managerial posts	855	470
Service supply of the Royal Greenland Trade Department	77	138
Clerks	149	261
Foremen	84	52
Skilled craftsmen	790	375
Service	72	52
Sailors	16	193
Unskilled labour	604	4502
Fishermen	—	2000
Total	*2647*	*8043*

[1]Note the dominance of Danes in skilled labour and managerial posts.

Naturally, therefore, they gave nearly all the skilled work to reliable men from Denmark, while Greenlanders who ached for the experience or the training stood idly by and watched (Table 21). A number of the islanders then raised the cry of racial discrimination and carried their complaints across the ocean to Copenhagen.[1] Has any industrialized nation operating in an undeveloped country escaped similar accusations?

Racial animosity bristled, too, over the different wage scales for Greenlanders and Danes, and the peculiar definition given to the term Greenlander

Table 22. Income and collective consumption of all Greenlanders, 1947–62 (in millions of kroner).[2]

	1947	*1955*	*1960*	*1961*	*1962*
1. *Private income* from					
a. wage-employment	3.8	19.6	35.8	40.2	47.0
b. private activities	1.5	6.4	11.5	13.5	14.7
c. social services	0.2	1.5	3.0	2.9	3.3
d. in kind	2.8	7.0	9.7	10.1	11.6
Total income	*8.3*	*34.5*	*60.0*	*66.7*	*76.6*
2. *Collective consumption*	2.7	20.6	35.7	41.3	49.1
3. *Indices*, corrected for rise in prices and population					
a. Private consumption	100	139	176	189	191
b. Collective consumption	100	440	544	559	612

Table 23. Per capita income of Greenlanders, 1960–2.[3]

	1960	*1961*	*1962*
Total value of private income, including auto-consumption, in kroner (millions)	60.0	66.7	76.6
in U.S. dollars (millions)	8.7	9.7	11.1
Total Greenlandic population	30,400	31,300	32,300
Average per capita income, in dollars	286	310	344
Average family (5 persons) income, in dollars	1430	1550	1720

[1]Cf. the article by Bornemann, 1960, and a reply by Rosendahl, 1961.

[2]I have eliminated a few items in the table supplied me by the Economic Division of the Ministry for Greenland, because I could not understand them. The term "Collective Consumption" signifies the cost to the government of its free public services, i.e. education, health etc. "Social Services" covers children's allowances, pensions, relief, etc.; and "Private Activities" the sale of fish, sealskins and other items to the Royal Greenland Trade Department, minus a deduction for costs. The rise in the indices for "Private Consumption" show that real income has virtually doubled since 1947; and those for "Collective Consumption" indicate that government expenditure on schools, health, and other free public services has increased six-fold during the same period.

[3]This table, also supplied by the Economic Division of the Ministry for Greenland, converts into U.S. dollars the total of private incomes for 1960–2 given in Table 22, and the incomes per head of population and per family; for during those three years the relation between the krone and the dollar remained steady at approximately 6.9 Kr. = $1 U.S. and the prices of goods imported into Greenland underwent little change. I had hoped to compare this table with similar income figures computed for the Eskimos of arctic Canada (Jenness, 1964, p. 152, Fig. 12) and also perhaps of Alaska; but after observing the superior living conditions in West Greenland, and the much higher cultural level of its population, I decided that such a comparison would tell the reader little more than he could glean himself from pictures of Greenlanders and American Eskimos, from photographs of the interior of their homes, and from the records of their educational attainments.

in labour circles. If a Greenland youth finished his vocational training in Denmark, practised his trade there for ten years (as some did to gain the higher wages), and then returned to his native land, he ranked as a Danish skilled worker and received the pay of a Dane, whereas his brother or cousin, who might work beside him and display even greater skill, but had trained in Greenland only, received the lower wages of a Greenlander. In 1964 the Danish government finally rescinded this irritating regulation: it retained the higher wage rates for Danes working in Greenland because they paid property and income taxes in their homeland, and were liable to military service, but it defined as Greenlanders all persons who were born and resided in Greenland, whatever their descent and however long they might have lived and worked abroad, and it prescribed the same scale of wages for them all. It is a truism that rapid expansion always exacts a high toll, not only of money and material, but of human energy, courage, and morale. The balance cannot be all profit, and these dissatisfied Greenlanders were paying a little of the price.

Economically all Greenland was expanding fast; at a faster rate, even, than its population. The private income of the average Greenlander in 1962 shows this clearly (Tables 22 and 23), for it had almost doubled since 1947, after making full allowance for the rise in prices and the growth of the population. About half the increase occurred between 1947 and 1953, when Denmark, after a preliminary assessment of the changes that had taken place during the war, began to flood the west coast with inboard and outboard motors for the fishing fleets, and to pour large sums of money into Greenland's public services, health, education, and housing, actions which gave an impetus to economic production and multiplied the amount of wage-employment. It is true that about half the expenditure on wages went to Danish doctors, teachers, foremen, and other trained personnel from Denmark; but the authorities hope that this situation will prove only temporary, and that today's speed-up in Greenland education and training will soon reduce the need for so many outsiders. After 1953, when Greenland became a part of the Danish realm, the subsidies from the mother country grew heavier still, until by 1962 they averaged yearly about $5,000 U.S. per Greenland family. Yet in spite of these subsidies, says Boserup, the West Greenlander's personal income still equalled no more than 40 per cent of that enjoyed by the average man in Denmark (1963, p. 479); and in a later passage he declared:

> "Even on sanguine assumptions regarding the natural conditions for fishing, the movement of Greenland's terms of trade, and the effects on efficiency to be expected from the more vigorous policy of education, the growth of output is unlikely to be rapid enough to bring real wages and real incomes in the extractive industries to a level anywhere near to that of comparable groups in Denmark." (Boserup, 1963, p. 502).

And the Director of the Royal Greenland Trade Department sagely wrote,

> "The small farmer of the Jutlandic heath must pay for the song of larches and the personal liberty with a lower standard of living. In the same way, the disadvantage created by long distance and harsh nature can never be taken away from Greenland." (Christiansen, 1959, translation from p. 321).[1]

[1]He might have added, perhaps, that the Jutlanders have always been able to move out of their environment if they wished. Long ago, in fact, quite a few of them exchanged their native heath for the heath of England's Yorkshire! The ancient Greenlanders, on the other hand, could not escape, for they knew of no land except their own.

The abolition of the trade monopoly in 1950, and the opening up of Greenland to Danish commercial enterprises, failed to produce the influx of Danish entrepreneurs which the Royal Commission had anticipated. A few private firms established themselves on the island, and they are flourishing fairly well, especially the building contractors, who have taken over many of the construction jobs and use mostly Greenlandic workmen.[1] Government controls prevent prices from getting out of hand, and any "Get-Rich-Quick" speculator who may have sped to the island as soon as it opened its doors presumably took the first aircraft home again. The Royal Greenland Trade Department continues to handle 85 per cent of the trade, and will probably remain a powerful factor in the province for many years to come.

Sustained economic expansion requires a continuously growing body of skilled executives, scientists, and workmen whose training is a slow-motion vehicle only too prone to creak along in a rut. You cannot apply to education the methods of a fish-canner—build a "factory-school", gather in your raw material, turn on a switch and immediately produce a continuous stream of mathematicians, doctors, electricians, nurses, and other professionals. For ten years and more Greenland's school-authorities and teachers on the one hand, and pupils and parents on the other, struggled to adjust themselves to the changes introduced by Denmark's legislation in 1950, particularly to its division of the largest primary schools into two lines, the one offering more and more teaching in the Danish language, and the other continuing along the old road where all instruction was given in Greenlandic. The change proceeded smoothly in the town schools, where Danes thronged the streets and the harbours every summer and a number remained the year round, adding to the communities' activities and entertainments. Danish teachers found a little of the home atmosphere in them, and some lingered contentedly for several years; but whoever chanced to be sent to a small village felt so lonely there that he (or she) dropped out as soon as he completed his two-year term; and the poorer Greenlandic teachers normally stationed at such places seldom possessed any competence in the Danish language. Consequently, even though that language was a compulsory subject in most primary schools, few teachers outside the main towns actually taught it in Danish, and inability to speak or understand it blocked many children from continuing their education beyond the primary stage. Here again we must recall that down to the Second World War most Greenland boys expected to earn their livelihoods by fishing or seal-hunting, and most girls to marry and become house-wives at the age of about fifteen; consequently, both the children and their parents were satisfied with an education that enabled them to count, to read and write in their own language, and to enjoy the small amount of literature that was published in the Greenlandic tongue. Man, while very adaptable everywhere, is at the same time very conservative; in all countries he looks back to the world of his childhood through rose-coloured spectacles, and prefers the old way of life to the new.

[1] "The development has resulted in about 20% of the retail trade and about 20% of the construction work now being taken care of by private tradespeople. . . . The main part of the larger enterprises is owned by non-Greenlanders, and this has caused some anxiety. . . . The Committee expects that the private infusion in business life will increase." ("Sammenfatning af udvalgets forslag", 1964, English translation, p. 15).

An ex-cannibal chief, who was sitting beside me long ago on the stone platform of his New Guinea hamlet, watching his people feast on a wild pig I had shot that morning, reflected—nostalgically?—"That four-legged animal is well baked and very tender; but you would consider it rather tasteless if you had ever eaten 'long pig'." (i.e. man).

The requirement since 1950 that Greenland children should study two languages from their ninth year onward restricts the hours they can spend on other subjects, and weights their curricula rather heavily. The burden persists for those who aim at a professional career and pass on to the Godthåb high school, for there they must maintain their studies of both Danish and Greenlandic, and also add one, and perhaps two other languages, German and English, if they hope to continue their education in Denmark, since the last two languages are compulsory in all Danish gymnasia. German and Danish are kindred languages, and an individual who has acquired one as his native tongue easily learns to speak the other, but the Eskimo language, of which Greenlandic is a dialect, differs entirely from any European tongue in both thought-pattern and structure. Consequently the Greenlandic child in a small outpost who is forced to study Danish at the age of nine years finds himself in much the same position as would a Canadian child in British Columbia who from the third grade on had to learn to speak Chinese or Japanese. As the Committee on Social Research in Greenland cogently warned:

> "a school maintaining instruction both in Greenlandic and in Danish makes extraordinarily great demands on the pupils. . . . maintaining two languages as different from one another as Danish and Greenlandic may perhaps not be reconciled to the wish of making the pupils of the primary school acquire the same proficiency in the other subjects as pupils in corresponding age-groups acquire in Denmark. Thus, for the large majority of the Greenland population, it may well be that, in keeping both languages, an educational equality of status is rendered difficult—perhaps even impossible. On the other hand, in maintaining the demand for educational equality, it might be impossible or difficult to maintain both languages." ('Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland', vol. 2, 1961, pp. 55–6).[1]

Time will undoubtedly solve this problem, but of the final issue there can be little doubt. If the Greenlandic language could be readily developed to meet the needs of modern commerce, science, and technology—which it cannot—there might be strong grounds for easing the load on the children by delaying the teaching of Danish until high school. But the clock of change never runs backward, and the Greenlanders cannot return to their ancient isolation. Unless they are prepared to see their children and grandchildren become the coolies of outsiders, they must encourage the present generation to endure the burden of mastering some internationally known language that will give them a role in world affairs, small though that role may be. The Greenlandic tongue may still persist for many generations as a living language, and probably will, just as Basque persists on Spain's northern coast and in the contiguous district of southern France; but Danish, or some other world tongue, must become the medium for Greenland's relations with nations beyond its shores.

The primary schools of the main towns enrol enough pupils to maintain seven full classrooms for all grades from 1 to 7, but those in smaller communities

[1]The present situation in arctic Alaska strongly supports the latter conclusion, see Jenness, 1962, pp. 62–3.

must reduce the number; most of them try to maintain at least three, but a few provide only one (Table 24). The Commission that prepared the ground for the 1950 legislation had advocated that every school with forty or more pupils should be supervised by a fully trained Danish-speaking teacher, and the authorities have done their best to carry out this recommendation. By 1958–9 fully educated, Danish-speaking teachers had charge of 61 per cent of all school children under fourteen years of age, and teachers trained only in Greenland controlled 26 per cent, most of them in settlements which could register from 21 to 51 children. Teachers with a different education, or with almost none, instructed the remaining 13 per cent of the primary school population, all in small outposts none of which could master more than 21 pupils.

Table 24. Primary schools, 1961–2.

School types	*1-2-class*	*3-class*	*4-class*	*5-class*	*7-class*[1]	*Total*
No. of pupils	738	874	724	330	3016	5682
Percentage of schools	13	15	13	6	53	100

In these small outposts, it is clear, primary education is still far from satisfactory, but the government is trying to meet the situation by gathering many of their third- and fourth-year pupils into the more populous settlements, boarding them in private homes or specially built lodging-houses, and enrolling them in larger schools. The Committee for Social Research regarded as equally unsatisfactory the current text-books, both those in Danish and those in Greenlandic, because they failed to make adequate allowance for the peculiar environmental conditions under which Greenlandic children spend thir days. Copenhagen is now reviewing this problem also.

The same Committee made two other important recommendations. It believed that instead of adding new post-primary schools to the three now existing in order to prepare more candidates for the Godthåb high school,[2] the authorities should raise the school-leaving age from 14 to either 15 or 16, and should provide grades 8 and 9 education in the primary schools. Anticipating, furthermore, a rapid growth in the primary school population during the next ten or fifteen years (the Ministry for Greenland predicts that by 1975 that population will have risen from the 5,682 of 1961 to approximately 11,000), it considered that Greenland should count on building two more high schools, and perhaps even three, to bring her educational facilities on a level with those in other parts of the nation ('Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland,' vol. 2, 1961, pp. 51–6).

In 1962 Denmark took a step in another direction. She established a Greenland Educational Council, which immediately began to look into the question of vocational guidance for both young people and adults, since the island's remarkable growth during and since the Second World War had brought within their reach a large number of occupations not previously available. Some of these occupations are entirely new, for example, work at the airfields, broadcasting station, and meteorological posts; others have been preempted hitherto by Danes. The Educational Council is now working along

[1]These include both the *B* and the *A* lines, i.e. those which use Danish as the language of instruction and those which use only Greenlandic.

[2]In 1958–9 the then existing post-primary schools were unable to accept more than about 10 per cent of the pupils who completed grade 7.

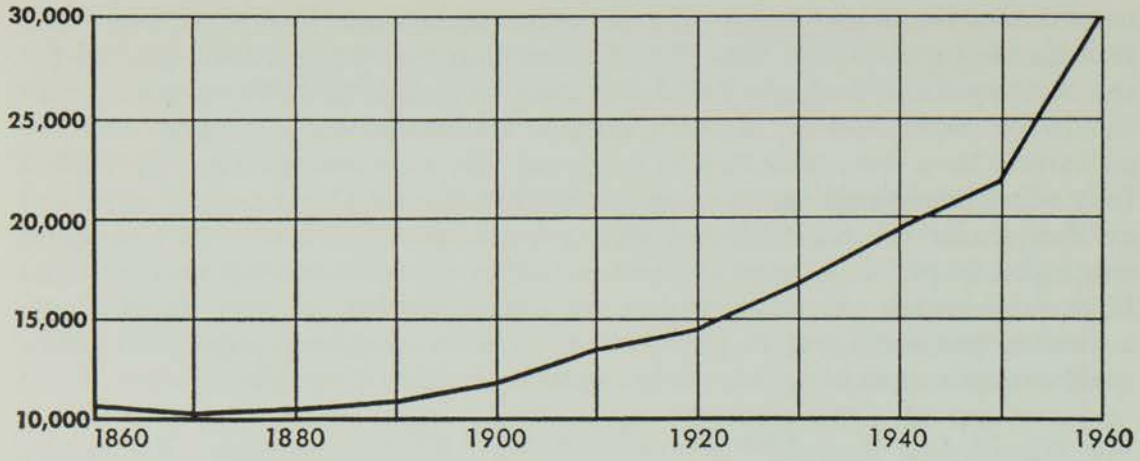

Fig. 11. Population of Greenland, 1860–1961 (excluding Danes). Note the slight decline in the population between 1860 and 1870, its very slow rise from 1870 to 1920, when economic conditions were improving greatly in all parts of the island, and its very rapid growth since 1950, following the opening of the campaign against tuberculosis. The graph is based on Birket-Smith, 1924, pp. 20–1, Sveistrup, 1949, p. 31, Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1949, p. 3, and figures from the Economic Division, Greenland Ministry.

two lines: it is evolving plans whereby all schools in Greenland will provide vocational training; and it is arranging that they shall also offer individual guidance at the earliest date possible ('Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland', vol. 3, 1963, p. 68).

The steady growth in school enrolments mirrors the rapid increase in the populations of Greenland's three districts. Down to about 1850, when for the first time the censuses taken on the west coast became reasonably accurate, the population of that region seems to have oscillated up and down quite violently owing to intermittent famines,[1] poor living conditions, the ravages of diseases and the dearth of medical service; on the whole, however, it averaged much the same as it was in Egede's day, i.e. 8,000 or somewhat less. We have no clue to the number of people living in eastern and northern Greenland during the eighteenth century. In northern Greenland, the Thule regions, it may have approximated its number in Peary's day, less than 300; but on the east coast, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, a diminution in the accessible shoals of capelin brought continuous famine which by 1884 had reduced the population of that side of the island to 548 (see pp. 59–61 and Fig. 5). Then the tide turned; and from about 1870 on the west coast, 1900 on the east, the population has increased everywhere at an annual rate averaging from about 1.2 to 2 per cent in 1950 to 4 per cent or slightly more at the present day (Fig. 11).

Now 4 per cent is an exceedingly high rate of increase, among the highest in the world, if we consider the natural increase only and leave out of account

[1]Dr. A. E. Porsild believes that the abundant sculpin or sea-scorpion (*Cottus scorpius*) in West Greenland's waters prevented much outright starvation along that coast. He once asked an old hunter what fish or animal he considered the most valuable, and the man answered after a moment's reflection, "the sculpin; for we catch it the year round, but seals and caribou only at certain seasons."

the effect of immigration—as we can in the case of Greenland, since the only immigrants there have been a few Danes whom we have excluded from our calculations. The 4 per cent increase, therefore, represents the difference between the mortality rate and the birth rate. Both have always been high in Greenland, where the hazards of life were, and still are, numerous, and only the great fecundity of the race saved it from extinction during the 4,000 years or more that it has occupied the island. There is no reason to believe that it is less fecund now than formerly; indeed, as Fig. 12 shows, the birth rate has tended to rise in this twentieth century. More striking than the rise in the birth rate, however, has been the fall in the death rate, and it is to this more than to any other cause that we must attribute the present transformation of the Greenlanders from a stationary and, in some places, a declining race to one that is growing with amazing speed. Both the fall in the death rate and the slight rise in the birth rate must surely result from two factors: first, the improved social and economic conditions, together with the heightened morale which, born in the days of Rink, survived even the dark years around the turn of the century; and, second, the dedicated work of the small medical corps which Denmark has stationed on the island. The improvement in the social and economic conditions—the banishment of periodic starvation, the greater security of life, the better homes, and the generally higher standard of living—we have outlined in the preceding pages; and in Table 11 we epitomized the progress of Greenland's health service down to 1947. Let us now carry forward that service's record to 1962.

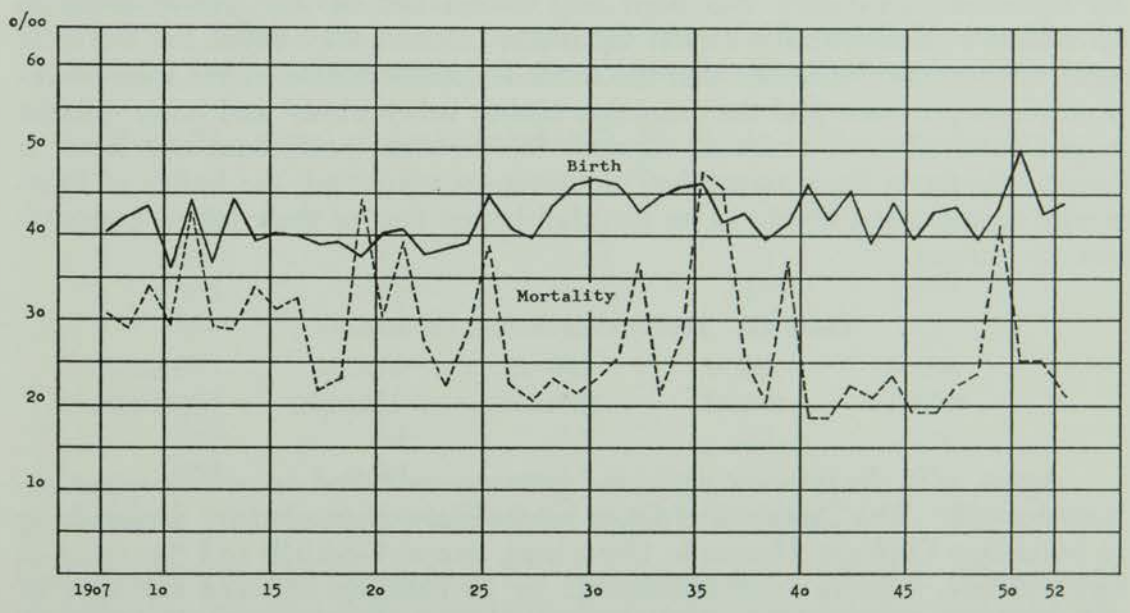

Fig. 12. Birth and mortality rates, 1907–52. (From Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 7). The birth rate during this half century shows a slight tendency to rise: at the beginning of the period it averaged about 40 per 1,000, at the end 42–3. The mortality rate fluctuated much more heavily, from 47.7 per 1,000 in 1935 to 18.8 per 1,000 in 1940 and 1941, the war years when Greenland was severed almost completely from the rest of the world. Such heavy fluctuations doubtless reflect the ravages of periodic epidemics on a small population. During the period as a whole, however, the trend has been definitely downward, the result of increasing medical care and securer conditions.

Between 1947 and 1952 the medical staff and its operations underwent little change. A small increase in the number of doctors and trained nurses counterbalanced a decrease in the army of midwives who serviced the outposts.[1] The tuberculosis survey continued, and more patients suffering from that disease were hospitalized, many of them in Denmark, whose sanatoria, having brought their own tuberculosis problem under control, could provide a large number of empty beds. Epidemics came and went—the annual colds and influenza at the opening of spring that never failed to carry off numerous victims from among the very young and the old, even when they spared the others; diphtheria and smallpox, against which vaccination was now compulsory in every part of Greenland; whooping-cough and typhoid, for which special vaccination was obligatory only to the inhabitants of the most threatened districts. There was a calm in the air such as precedes the arrival of an approaching breeze. Officialdom in Copenhagen was brooding over the recommendations of the medical experts who had investigated Greenland's health situation in 1947, and studying legislation that would shortly flow from them. It did not permit the already established health program in the colony to stagnate, but increased the funds for it a little so that it could provide the same services as before, and even improve them slightly, without making any significant changes. By 1951, however, Greenland's status as an integral part of Denmark had been clearly outlined: her health department had been incorporated into that of the mother country, a Public Health Commission created to keep watch over the entire island, local health committees appointed in each of its 13 medical districts, and a new hospital, the Queen Ingrid Sanatorium with 211 beds reserved exclusively for tuberculous patients, was beginning to rise out of the granite rocks in Greenland's administrative capital Godthåb. Denmark's budget for the next year, 1952–3, more than doubled the funds for medical care in her soon-to-be-proclaimed province, and the campaign against tuberculosis[2] and other diseases surged forward with renewed vigour. Of the final goal there was never a doubt. As far as the geographical environment permitted, the health of Denmark's new citizens should in no way fall below that of their fellow-countrymen in Europe.

Table 25. Health expenditures (in kroner).[3]

1923–4	*1938–9*	*1949–50*	*1951–2*	*1952–3*
177,514	474,105	2,171,035	2,919,492	6,320,000

Again, as in the pre-war years, the government called on private organizations for aid. The Danish Red Cross immediately responded by undertaking to build two Orphans' Homes in Greenland, one at Godthåb and the other at Egedesminde, each to accommodate 22 or 24 children between the ages of three and fourteen. The Godthåb home opened its doors in 1952, the Egedesminde one three years later; and in 1958 the Red Cross erected still a third one at Julianehåb. A special Red Cross Board in Copenhagen administers

[1]See Table 39 in Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 69.

[2]The health authorities blamed pulmonary tuberculosis for 34.1 per cent of all deaths in Greenland during 1952.

[3]The table makes no allowance for the changing values of the krone, the rising costs of goods and services, and the growth in population from roughly 15,000 to 23,000.

them, and the local medical officers in Greenland supervise them, watch over the children's health and ensure their attendance at the local schools. Their matrons are Danish nurses, each assisted by a Danish children's nurse or kindergarten teacher and two or more Greenland women. By 1958 the Red Cross had invested nearly a million kroner in these homes, besides contributing a considerable sum annually towards their running cost.[1] Money alone, of course, tells us little, but a personal visit to one home impressed the writer with the happy results a government can often achieve by enlisting the services of voluntary organizations.

By 1953 medical surveys had revealed that 6–7 per cent of the population was suffering from open, infectious tuberculosis, that the disease was carrying off 150–200 victims annually, and that from 1,500–2,000 individuals needed immediate attention. Greenland's doctors and nurses had been fighting the plague with all their strength, but their facilities for detecting fresh cases were too defective, their hospitals too small and in some cases too ill-equipped. Only with difficulty were they holding their ground when in 1953 an epidemic of poliomyelitis swept West Greenland and added to the mounting death-roll.

The following spring the Queen Ingrid Sanatorium with its more than 200 beds accepted its first patients. By that year, 1954, all district hospitals were carrying X-ray and other equipment, and a medical party, in a specially built X-ray vessel, the *Missigssut*,[2] was scouring the west coast examining the inhabitants of every settlement and transporting to a shore hospital every patient in need of prolonged treatment. This campaign continued for several years, and the results were dramatic. Each year the number of tuberculous cases diminished and the deaths from that disease declined. By the end of the 1950's it had fallen from its number one place as a killer to well down the list (Table 26), and the Queen Ingrid Sanatorium, relieved of its overwhelming

Table 26. Causes of death in Greenland, 1951–8 (per 1,000 of population).

Year	*T.B.*	*Epidemics*[a]	*Other ailments*[b]	*Accidents*
1951	8.7	5.6	7.9	1.9
1952	8.0	3.4	7.5	1.6
1953	5.0	3.9	6.0	1.7
1954	4.1	4.3	5.5	2.0
1955	2.8	3.2	6.8	2.1
1956	1.0	3.0	6.6	2.9
1957	0.6	3.5	5.2	3.0
1958	0.9	1.5	5.9	1.9

[a]includes lung inflammations; [b]includes influenza, whooping cough, measles, etc.

load, could provide many beds for non-tuberculous patients. Greenland's doctors then directed their hardest blows at other dragons—the perennial epidemics of influenza and lung inflammations, whooping cough, and measles, and specialists toured the island to uncover less wide-ranging ailments. Denmark engaged some of her most highly trained medical men in the battle. After

[1]Bugge, 1959, pp. 69–71.

[2]The *Missigssut*, which was donated by the Danish public to the Greenland Health Service following a special subscription drive initiated in 1952 by King Frederik and Queen Ingrid (Bugge, 1959, p. 68), still plies its mission each year along Greenland's west coast.

the visit of an otologist in 1962 the two middle rows of pews in the churches of Umanak and Upernavik (and perhaps elsewhere) acquired ear-phones so that the deaf might participate in the services. On the comfortable steamer which carried me north to Upernavik in 1964 a dozen or more deaf and dumb children were returning home from their school in Denmark to spend the summer vacation with their families; lightly supervised by two nurses, they raced along the decks as happy as other children, and a number found a joyful reception at Egedesminde, where their kinsfolk had gathered to meet them. On the same boat travelled Denmark's leading psychiatrist, sent to Greenland on a special mission.

Accidents will always be common, perhaps, in Greenland's stormy waters and on her rocky, precipitous coasts; since 1956 they have been causing more deaths than tuberculosis. Greenland's most serious health problem, however, is the high mortality among infants under the age of twelve months. The rate has fallen, to be sure, from 134.2 per 1,000 in 1948 to 65.9 per 1,000 in 1961, but it still remains more than three times the corresponding rate in Denmark. The causes, as we saw earlier (p. 71) are multiple: climatic, economic, the ignorance of Greenlandic mothers and the tinge of fatalism which they inherit from their part-Eskimo ancestry. In this field lies the greatest opportunity today for the island's medical corps. The Society in Aid of Greenland Children has increased to five the number of sanatoria it now operates, largely for children from tuberculosis-infected homes; and the government has banned from all new houses the traditional wide couch that once bedded the whole family and between 1957 and 1960 alone caused the unwitting suffocation of 22 infants. But the medical corps needs much more aid from education and greater support from improvements in housing and diet. In these directions it is trying to point the way itself by stationing specially trained nurses in all the larger towns to combat the high infant mortality.[1]

The life expectation of the Greenlanders is rising, but still remains very much lower than in Denmark, for reasons not easily explained. As appears from Table 27 below, very few of the islanders, hardly more than 6 per cent, survive their 54th year; but replacing them are the multitudes of children who swarm in every settlement. One-fourth of the entire population is below school age, and over 40 per cent has not yet reached the age of 14. Their

Table 27. Percentages of age groups in 1955.[2]

Age group	*Greenland*	*Denmark*
0–6 years	24.5	11.8
7–13	17.7	13.3
14–19	12.5	8.5
20–34	22.6	19.9
35–54	16.4	26.7
55–64	4.3	9.9
65–	2.0	9.9

[1] 'Sundhedstilstanden i Grønland' for 1961, pp. 82–3.

[2] Note the extraordinary number of children in Greenland, and the fewness of people over 55 years of age.

number imposes a heavy economic strain on the parents, unless the wife as well as the husband earns a steady wage; and it imposes an equally heavy strain on the government, which must provide adequate housing, schools, medical care and, as far as possible, full employment. At its present rate of increase, over 4 per cent, Greenland's population will double within 25 years, unless emigration drains away a considerable proportion; and if the birth rate remains as high as now it will continue to be a population of predominantly young people who will never cease to demand more and more homes, more and more schools, more and more employment opportunities, and at the same time, perhaps, more of those things which we dwellers in temperate climes have come to consider necessities, but which the present-day Greenlanders still regard as pure luxuries. Civilization it would seem, has transferred a fragment of India's problem to the Arctic and laid it squarely on Denmark's shoulders. How will she deal with it?

CHAPTER 8

G.60: The new Ten-Year Plan

Certain recent phenomena have aroused apprehensions that biological conditions in west Greenland are changing, and that the region may shortly become less favourable for human habitation, less capable of supporting any greater number of people than it supports today. Since 1950, when it was still profitable for fishing vessels to pursue the cod as far north as Umanak Fjord, their shoals have shrunk so greatly that it no longer pays to follow them north of Egedesminde. On the other hand, in the same region seals and Greenland halibut have become more numerous, which may indicate that the subsurface waters off Greenland's west coast are growing slightly cooler. Our misgivings deepen when we observe that the quantity of cod handled in 1963 by the Royal Greenland Trade Department, which is by far the largest dealer, reached barely two-thirds the amount it handled in 1962, and fell considerably below the average of the four preceding years, 1958–61[1] (Table 28); in the summer of 1964, again, the cod harvest threatened to be so much smaller that, of the fifty vessels which were supplying the Godthåb cannery, forty-five abandoned their fishing stations off the settlement on July 24, an unusually early date, and sailed to Disko Bugt in order to take part in the north's shrimp fishery, although the government restricts the shrimp catch there lest it exceed the capacity of the local factories. Experts have noted, further, that the average size of the cod trawled in the deep waters inshore of the Greenland banks[2] during the last two autumns has been smaller than in former years, which raises the spectre of overfishing by suggesting that, in certain years at least, fewer spawn are reaching maturity.[3] When we remember that it is hardly more than fifty years since the vast shoals of cod began to appear off Greenland's west coast year after year with unfailing regularity, we cannot help wondering whether we are now experiencing a reduction in the strength of that branch of the Gulf Stream which reverses its course near Iceland and swings northwest around Kap Farvel, and whether this reduction is making the subsurface waters of west Greenland less suited to cod, but more attractive to the seals which once abounded south of Disko Bugt and supplied most of the food that sustained the Greenlanders along that part of the coast.

A glance at northern Europe fails to reassure us, for there several meteorologists maintain that the summers are becoming more unsettled, the winters

[1]Though the catch was small, market prices were high, so that the fishermen earned nearly as much as in the previous years.

[2]The twelve-mile limit from its headlands which Greenland now claims as its territorial boundary does not reach the main fishing-banks.

[3]A Danish biologist tells me that the small average size of the cod could result, not from over-fishing, but from a late maturing of their principal food, copepods, owing to storms and other adverse conditions. In such seasons many of the larger cod probably starve.

colder and more stormy; and this too, if correct, may reflect a change of climate also caused by the Gulf Stream—by that second arm of it which sweeps past northern Ireland and up the shores of Norway to the Arctic Ocean, keeping mid-winter coastal waters ice-free and navigable almost to Arkhangel'sk. It may be that some of us will yet live to see London children skating again up and down the Thames River as in the days of Good Queen Bess, although we may then be too old to skate with them.

Another puzzling phenomenon is the increasing number of Atlantic salmon which have appeared in south Greenland's waters during the last two years. Some, as we know from the tags they carry, have travelled thither from the Maritime provinces of Canada, while others have migrated all the way from northern Scotland. Salmon is a high-priced fish which in the frozen state can be readily marketed in the United States. Although it can never attain the enormous multitudes of the cod, a quadrupling of its numbers would usefully enlarge Greenland's narrow resource-base, add to its fishing revenues, and attract perhaps a considerable number of sportsmen (see p. 80).

To be frank, we face at this moment a sea of uncertainties. We lack definite proof that the ocean currents around Greenland are changing, and that its climate is beginning to deteriorate and revert to the harsh regime of the fifteenth and subsequent centuries. We cannot be sure that the cod population really is diminishing, and that the variations we have been observing are not just oscillations of a temporary character that carry no permanent significance.

Table 28. Fish sold to the Royal Greenland Trade Department during the period 1950–63 (yearly average in tons).

	1950–3	*1954–7*	*1958–61*	*1962*	*1963*
Cod (whole fish)	19,650	21,536	29,765	36,300	24,800
Shrimps	210	538	1,500	3,460	3,340
Wolf-fish (whole)	857[a]	3,228	2,950	1,700	2,520
Greenland halibut	271	844	1,440	1,300	2,360
Salmon	—	—	90[b]	300	400
Total (tons)	*20,988*	*26,146*	*35,745*	*43,060*[c]	*33,420*[d]

[a]Output in 1952; [b]Average output of 1960 and 1961; [c]180 tons were sold to private exporters; [d]Includes 1,700 tons sold to private exporters. I am indebted for the table to the Economic Division of the Ministry for Greenland.

Neither can we hazard a guess at the strength of the competition Greenlanders may encounter from foreign fishing fleets in and around the offshore banks during the next decade or two, nor how the operations of these fleets will affect the fishing in Greenland's territorial waters.[1] Turning our eyes in another direction, we are totally unable to predict whether the present ratio between world prices for Greenland's exports and the costs of the vital goods and labour she now imports will alter substantially during the next quarter-century, and if it does, whether it will improve or jeopardize the island's economy. Furthermore, no one can foretell whether world conditions will permit Denmark to maintain her huge capital investments for the economic expansion which must

[1]Danish authorities anticipate that during the 1960 decade, pending their training to handle larger vessels and modern fishing-gear, Greenlanders will fish near the outer margins of their twelve-mile territorial limit rather than beyond it on the main banks.

accompany the steady increase in Greenland's population if the present standard of living, today much lower than in Denmark, is to be raised or even upheld. The Danish government has worked out four estimates of what that population may be by 1985; the lowest is 50,000, the highest 74,000. Already (1964) it approaches 35,000 excluding the more than 3,000 residents who were born in Denmark and counting only the Greenland-born. We may reasonably anticipate, therefore, that it will reach double that figure by the end of this century, unless large numbers of Greenlanders emigrate or some unpredictable catastrophe intervenes.

The rapid growth of Greenland's human population is an established fact; even in 1958, estimated the Director of the Royal Greenland Trade Department, it was calling for 500–1,000 new jobs yearly (Christiansen, 1959, p. 326). As for the island's fish, seals, and other resources, the records tell us that since about 1915 the climatic change has brought so vast an increase in the quantity of cod off Greenland's shores that the fishing industry now provides 80 per cent of the island's revenues, whereas sealing, which as late as 1940 was still more profitable than fishing, now contributes only 15 per cent. But our scientists cannot tell us why the climate changed so suddenly, nor whether it will swing back just as unpredictably. In the meantime Denmark must plan for Greenland's future with her eyes blinkered.

The shrimp and halibut fisheries flourish, but neither appears capable of significant expansion; and the same is true, it would seem, of the wolf-fish, shark, and whale fisheries. Not one of them is likely to add much more to Greenland's gross national product than the small amount it contributes today. As for the seals which formerly provided a permanent but oft-times treacherous base for the economy of Eskimos in nearly every part of the Arctic, they could produce a very considerable revenue if their numbers increased again, as they have in Umanak and Upernavik districts these last two years, if the nations of the world will check the brutal slaughter of the two species that now breed, one in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the other near Jan Mayen Island, before proceeding to their summer feeding-grounds in southwest Greenland (see p. 43), and if merchants continue to offer the present extraordinarily high prices for their skins. But when we recall the inflated prices that were offered for all varieties of fox furs in 1930, and their sudden collapse a year later, we will hesitate to place great confidence in the fluctuating value of any skin.

Promising resources of other kinds are not in sight. Despite continuous research for a whole century, from the days indeed of Hans Egede, Greenland's mineral wealth, if she possesses any, defies discovery, although the geological structures of several districts raise hope of exploitable ores. The low-grade deposits of coal in the Disko Bugt region have been worked for a hundred years, but the seams fade out very quickly, and it has been found more profitable to supply half of Greenland's need for solid fuel with better coal from Wales; in any case oil furnaces are replacing many coal-burning ones in the larger centres, and the oil must be imported, for Greenland has yielded no producing wells, despite signs of oil in Disko Bugt. The lead and zinc ore at Mesters Vig, on the northeast coast, has petered out, leaving only reports, as yet unconfirmed, that payable quantities of molybdenum may occur in the vicinity; the cryolite mine at Ivigtut has been exhausted and breathes only

through its stockpiles, which may possibly last another ten years; and the Josva Copper Mine, a short distance south of Ivigtut, has been abandoned and allowed to flood with water, after yielding in nine years only ninety tons of copper and a few ounces of gold and silver (Bøggild, 1929, pp. 393–4). Geologists never cease investigating this or that part of the country, their hopes seemingly undampened by many unbroken years of fruitless search. It will be a happy day for Greenland if they succeed, and bring into production some mine that will take the place of the cryolite.[1]

There remains farming, not, to be sure, the cultivation of grain, which in today's mild climate will not ripen even in the extreme south, but the growing of grass for fodder and the raising of such hardy vegetables as potatoes, kale, beets, rhubarb, cabbages, and carrots for local consumption. Unfortunately Greenland, or those parts of it which are not covered by the ice cap and its effluent glaciers, is extremely mountainous, and surveys have uncovered very few patches of fertile land not underlain by permafrost. Raising cattle is too precarious, but sheep-farming flourishes in a few localities from Julianehåb south, as it did in the days of the Vikings. Its flocks now register about 30,000 ewes, a number which tillage and fertilization of the ground could conceivably double (Kampp, 1964, p. 97). Under present climatic conditions, however, sheep-farmers may still lose one-third or one-half of their animals whenever a succession of such winter gales as occurred in 1937–8, and again in 1948–9, glazes their pastures with ice, or a late spring retards the growth of plant life and reduces the quantity of fodder they can store away for the long winter.[2]

> "Otherwise [except for sheep] animal husbandry is insignificant. As at November 1st, 1953, livestock comprised some 20 goats, about 60 head of cattle, about 150 Icelandic horses, and 2,000-3,000 pieces of poultry, mostly hens." (Rept. Prime Min. Second Dept., 1954, p. 24).

Greenland's few square miles of ice-free soil, therefore, cannot support her multiplying families, nor have her rocks yet yielded any mineral treasures except the vanishing cryolite to pay for imported food and other necessities. But are there no industries her government could foster to overcome these deficiencies, industries that would bring in useful incomes and at the same time provide welcome activity during the long hours of winter? Nature has made the hands of Greenlanders slightly smaller than those of the white or dark races, but not one whit less skilful. At the present time they occupy themselves with a few handicrafts, which are pastimes rather than occupations (see p. 79, footnote); but could they not be trained to weave distinctive textiles,

[1] "A vast mountainous country like Greenland must conceal enormous mineral wealth, one feels; and it is true that the immense masses of rock contain quantities of minerals—gold and silver, nickel, lead, graphite, marble, coal, oil and iron, and much more. But so far one only has paid dividends—cryolite, mined at Ivigtut." (Therkilsen, 1961, pp. 113–4). In the summer of 1964 I met two employees of Canada's Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company who were studying the rocks in the Umanak district.

[2] Cf. pp. 77–8. The wool of these sheep is almost worthless. They are prized for their meat alone, and that is now being supplemented with meat from domesticated reindeer, which have increased from the 300 animals introduced in 1952 to about 4,000 and with careful herding could reach over 20,000. Greenland's grazing grounds are unhappily so limited that no conceivable expansion of either sheep or reindeer is ever likely to satisfy even half the needs of the growing population.

manufacture watches or parts for watches, assemble transistor radios, or engage in analogous activities that would produce a steady revenue?

Danish economists have pondered this subject and concluded that in remote Greenland no industry can be profitable unless it is based on the local resources. Transportation costs are too high for the profitable import of raw materials and the export of the goods manufactured from them, the labour force too scattered, and the difficulties in maintaining unbroken supply and production lines probably insuperable. Only those industries appear practicable that are based on the processing of native marine products—fish under today's conditions, seals, and possibly whales should those mammals ever regain their earlier abundance. Here is what Boserup says:

> "a rather negative view is taken of the possibilities of developing new lines of manufacturing. Fishing and the processing of fish must continue to be by far the most important line of commodity production.
>
> "This is perhaps not so strange. It is to be expected that for a very small population, living under exceptionally difficult natural conditions, the chance of economic survival without emigration lies in obstinate specialization in those lines of production which suffer least from the handicap imposed by nature." (Boserup, 1963, p. 482).

Boserup was consultant to a Royal Commission which Denmark appointed in 1960 to draw up a new ten-year program for Greenland. It finished its work early in 1964 and immediately issued a short summary of its recommendations, whereupon the government created a ten-member "Greenland Council"[1] to replace the old "Greenland Committee of Parliament" (see p. 118, footnote), provided it with a chairman and a secretariat, and directed this new body to clothe with flesh and blood the recommendations' bare bones. That work is now in progress, but with the Commission's summary to guide us we may consider some of the recommendations.[2]

Accompanying the summary is a brief statement of what should be Denmark's goals in Greenland. It sets forth three:

> *Goal 1*: "The aim of any Greenland policy must be to raise the political, social and cultural status of the population of Greenland and to improve the living standard. This aim must be reached through the co-operation of the people in Greenland with the rest of Denmark".
>
> The Commission explains the last sentence a few lines farther on:
>
> "It must be assured that the planning of the public activity takes place with the co-operation of the Provincial Council and that representatives from the Provincial Council enter the planning at as early a stage as possible so that the Provincial Council has a larger influence on the use of the funds made available by the treasury for purposes in Greenland. Thus work must be carried out in close co-operation between politicians of Greenland and Denmark".
>
> *Goal 2*: "The organization of Greenland industry and the ensuing development of Greenland society is the necessary basis for reaching the [above] desired goal. The organization of Greenland industry must take place through help to self-help. . . .

[1]Seven were members of Denmark's parliament, two being the representatives elected by Greenland, the other five representatives of Denmark's five main political parties. The three remaining members of the Council were appointed by Greenland's Provincial Council.

[2]Its Danish title is "Sammenfatning af udvalgets forslag". I have quoted from the English translation in the Library, Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa.

"With this aim in view, the Committee has rejected the idea of raising the personal incomes of the Greenland population to the level of those prevailing elsewhere in the kingdom and maintaining them there by a permanent subsidy from the treasury. Even if such a policy should appear feasible, it would not in the long run be in accordance with the interests of Greenland society, as the economic development then would not be determined by its own efforts, but much more by continuous subsidies from outside.

"The committee finds on the other hand, that the population has a need for, and right to public aid in the form of education, medical aid, housing aid etc. which should be larger in Greenland than in the rest of Denmark."

Goal 3: Only in negative terms has the committee outlined its third goal, namely, to keep the Greenlanders in Greenland as a special unit within the Danish kingdom, a unit possessing its own peculiar language, culture, and traditions, and economically as independent as the resources of the island permit. It lightly veils the goal in these words.

"The objectives of the Greenland Committee are clearly against a Greenland policy, the object of which is to give the population of Greenland economic equality with the rest of Denmark by aiding the Greenland population in gradually moving to Denmark so it may be absorbed in the Danish population.

"Such a policy would bring about, even though Denmark recognizes its responsibility regarding the supply of the most elementary necessities, that the Greenlanders who want to partake in the benefits and higher standard of living of modern civilization would have to move from Greenland to Denmark.

"No spokesman for the societies of Greenland or Denmark has yet however, publicly defended such a settlement of the problems of Greenland and the same is the case with the Greenland Committee. Such a policy would bring about a partial depopulation of Greenland and the end of the life of the Greenland population as a unit within the Danish kingdom, with its own language, its own culture and own traditions. This would not be a way of solving the Greenland problems, but to give up trying to solve them."

In the body of the Summary the Commission outlined a number of measures for achieving these three goals. To give the Greenlanders greater autonomy, and to increase their cooperation with European Danes, it recommended:

1. A readjustment of the duties on sugar, alcoholic beverages and other "sumptuary goods" imported into Greenland (see p. 120) to make them feed more money into the municipalities, thereby permitting the latter to enlarge their functions; and

2. Fuller representation of Greenland's Provincial Council on every government organization concerned with the province by granting it authority to appoint

   a. three members of the Greenland Council in Copenhagen instead of only two (see p. 118, footnote);

   b. three members to the directorate of the Royal Greenland Trade Department instead of only one;

   c. three members to the board (whenever it should be created) of the proposed Greenland Export Organization which would fix production norms and quality standards for Greenland fish, and also control their export; and

   d. two members to the supervisory board of the Greenland Technical Organization, the "public works" branch of the Ministry for Greenland (see chart of that Ministry's organization, Fig. 10).

These measures, the Commission felt, would integrate Greenland more closely with the government in Copenhagen and give the islanders a stronger voice in all activities affecting their administration, their trade, and their welfare. To perfect the integration Greenland's police should be placed under the Department of Justice in Denmark, her church under the Church Department, her radio be transferred to the Department of Culture, her telecommunications

to the Department of Public Works, her educational services to the Department of Education, and her health services to the Department of the Interior. The sum of these various administrative changes would go a long way, the Commission declared, towards producing that close cooperation between Greenlanders and Danes which appeared so vital for the constructional and cultural projects of the proposed ten-year plan.

The Commission outlined its views concerning these constructional and cultural projects in its discussion of Goal 2, the "organization of Greenland industry and the ensuing development of Greenland society", an immense field which it clearly assumed would not be hindered, at least for a time, by the stipulation of Goal 3, that the Greenlanders should be kept in Greenland as a special unit within the Danish Kingdom. It sketched a ten-year development plan which it estimated would cost the Danish government 4.2 billion kroner, one-half used for investment capital, the other half for salaries and allied expenses. It believed that the government should invest mainly in those towns of West Greenland that are accessible at all times by water, and lie adjacent to fishing-grounds that can be worked the year round. In those towns, Frederikshåb, Godthåb, Sukkertoppen, and a few others, it should concentrate most of the inhabitants of the outlying hamlets and build more roads, docks, shipyards, fish-processing plants, and especially dwellings, since before the end of the ten years the country would require, not just a reconditioning of many old homes, but the addition of about 4,500 new ones to house the increased population.[1] Only by heavy investments on carefully planned construction projects, and by a concentration of the population in the main fishing centres, did the Commission foresee any possibility of building up a strong fishing industry that would sensibly improve the family incomes of the West Greenlanders and raise their living standard. It suggested, therefore, that 30 per cent of the investment capital be devoted to new housing, 14 per cent to health and miscellaneous programs. If the building of larger fishing vessels could be carefully synchronized with the expansion of the fish-processing plants, and if the government successfully completed all related parts of the ten-year program, then by 1975, it believed, Greenland should be capable of exporting, not the insignificant 3,000 tons of frozen fish she exported in 1963, but 40,000 tons.

The 10 per cent of the investment funds allotted to education, it continued, should cover the costs of the new and larger primary schools that the growing population would require, and also of a new vocational school which should be built at Godthåb, between 1966 and 1968, to accommodate 200 students, of whom at least 160 should live in the school building and the remainder find lodgings in the town. This school should absorb the navigational school established in 1959 (see p. 110), and in 1970 should be enlarged to take in still more students, since Greenland might train there most of the carpenters, machinists, motor-mechanics, smiths, and other skilled workers she would need for her burgeoning fishing industry. Presumably it would supplement, not replace, the vocational schools already established at Holsteinsborg, Egedesminde, and Julianehåb; and it would certainly not interfere with the other training programs in operation today, namely, by the navy at Grønnedal, by the Lauritzen

[1] In 1964 the government's construction plans for Greenland covering the period 1964–7 included the erection of 897 single and double houses, and blocks of buildings containing 835 apartments.

Shipping Line in Denmark (see p. 104, footnote), and by the new Danish airline that services Greenland's two coastlines and trains a few Greenlanders as aircraft pilots and mechanics. In 1963, to ensure that Greenland standards would equal those in Europe, Denmark applied her own apprenticeship system to the island, and hereafter every Greenland journeyman and clerk must qualify for the Danish diploma. Furthermore, she is encouraging as many Greenlanders as possible to complete their training in Denmark. In 1962 she found places there for about 200; and she foresees no decrease in their number even when the proposed vocational school in Godthåb begins to operate at full capacity, so great is the demand for skilled workers in the island, and so great also the housing shortage which has been delaying the training program.

The third goal proposed by the Commission, to keep all or nearly all the Greenlanders in their native land, prosperous and contented, rests on the same three postulates as underpin the whole of the ten-year plan. They are

> 1. that for at least ten years and probably longer, the cod-fishery, augmented to a limited extent by the shrimp fishery, will provide an adequate economic base for 90 per cent of the island's inhabitants;
>
> 2. that the West Greenlanders, if supplied by Denmark with large vessels, more up-to-date equipment and other aids, can and will fish indefatigably to the outer limit of their territorial waters and perhaps beyond; furthermore that by this means they will be able greatly to expand the fishing industry;
>
> 3. that they can and will learn the new fishing techniques and expand their economy fast enough to outpace the growth of their population during the next ten or fifteen years, and to raise their average income.

Let us examine these three postulates a little more closely, and consider first the human population of Greenland, which numbers today (1964) about 35,000 and is growing at a rate of more than 4 per cent per annum. Boserup, who writes a little glowingly, one suspects, concerning the prospects of great expansion in Greenland's fishing industry, views with optimism also the growth of the population which will help to bring about that expansion:

> "the high rate of population increase therefore need not be deplored on economic grounds. As regards the political results of rapid population increase, they may be regarded as wholly beneficial. This is so because under the conditions of modern civilization a population of only 30,000 people—especially when scattered over a very large area —will find it difficult to preserve its identity as a community with its own characteristics, in internal balance, without undue seclusion or excessive domination by immigrants. With a population of 60–80,000—and with greatly improved educational facilities—these problems should be easier to solve." (Boserup, 1963, p. 481).

He echoes here the views of the Commission itself, which rejects emigration as a solution to some of Greenland's problems and declares (p. 163) that it would destroy the "life of the Greenland population as a unit within the Danish kingdom, with its own language, its own culture and own traditions".

An anthropologist who has spent the greater part of a lifetime in the study of the languages, cultures, and traditions of various native peoples cannot decry their value to their heirs—*so long as those languages, cultures, and traditions still live;* but when they die they become, to use the expression of an old Roman poet, ashes and empty shadows. What I have written concerning languages on an earlier page (p. 129) is equally true of cultures and traditions. They are

the raiments of life, not life itself. We can modify them, shorten or lengthen them, even discard them and put on new ones, as the negroes have done on the American continent: for we inherit of them only as much as is handed down from one generation to another, and the dice of fate decide whether that shall be little or much. The American negro has inherited very little from his African ancestors except a few physical characteristics, and some mental traits (among them a strong sense of rhythm) which are often difficult to untangle; and the West Greenland Eskimos of three centuries ago have bequeathed to their fishermen descendants not very much more than their language. In both races the old cultures and the old traditions have gone, have become mere memories, enshrined in dusty books, which no longer determine men's attitudes toward the world around them. Those memories may still possess a morale value which can inspire hope and courage in life's amphitheatre, but even that value is weak and fleeting.[1] The destinies of man are ruled by more enduring impulses—by hopes and fears and appetites, primal forces common to all the higher forms of life, against which man's ephemeral creations: his customs, traditions, and languages, cannot for long prevail, even when they retain their full vitality. Was it not these primal forces—which include a love of freedom —that drove Europeans of every nation to cross the Atlantic to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, that flooded Manchuria with Chinese in the first quarter of the twentieth, and that after the Second World War carried to Australia, Canada, and the United States fresh-cheeked brides from many different countries, ready to sacrifice all the 'raiments' of their earlier lives for security, happiness, and love. Cultures, traditions, and languages are expendable. Man's basic needs spring from much deeper roots.

Some of the Greenlanders themselves now realize this, and are reconciled to the cultural revolution that has reshaped their native land. Nielsen, their leading poet, writes:

> "The communal and hunting culture could not be maintained at its old high level as European influence spread, and so decadence set in. The Greenlanders were unable to develop their original culture and the transition to a European culture was attended by difficulties because they failed to understand it. It is only at the remotest settlements that the ancient culture has to some extent survived.
>
> "It may be said that the Greenlanders are only now acquiring a European culture. Many voices have been raised in favour of their preserving their own culture. But considering that its basis—the communal life and the occupation of hunting—can no longer be maintained owing to changed conditions, quite apart from the insistent claims of European culture, one can only hope for a continuation of present developments. More and more Greenlanders are educated in Denmark and are inevitably influenced by Danish culture; occupations become increasingly like those in the rest of the world. The country's whole social structure is being re-shaped to modern patterns. That the Greenlanders are capable of adopting and adapting these patterns is shown by the sheep-farmers who have already created a new peasant culture based on local conditions." (Nielsen, 1961, pp. 86–7).

Rightly or wrongly, therefore, it appears to me irrational to reject offhand all emigration from Greenland because it would destroy the life of its people as a unit, with its own language, customs, and traditions. Malthus's law relating

[1] They rarely influence more than one or two individuals. It was in vain that Mussolini tried to enthuse with visions of the 'glory that was Rome' an Italian people who had long outlived such visions, and could see neither glory nor profit in his ambitious dream of re-converting the Mediterranean Sea into *mare nostrum*.

human population with the food supply holds good in the Arctic just as elsewhere, even though we must introduce into his equation the effects of chemical fertilizers, contraception, rapid transportation, and other factors which no one in his day could foresee. Greenland's population problem is already acute in a few places, for example, Upernavik, Thule, and Angmagssalik, and without remedial action it will certainly become more acute each passing year. For the present both Greenlanders and Danes have rejected emigration as a partial solution, and rely entirely on relocation within Greenland itself and a more intensive exploitation of the island's fish and other resources, their prime reason being that Greenlanders, quite naturally, prefer to remain in their native land as a separate and distinct people. Greenland is their home; and while their young people cheerfully exile themselves in Denmark to acquire a higher education and skills, and may even seek employment there for a number of years, very few except some married women fail to return after the glow of the adventure has faded.[1] Certainly the probability of nostalgia and unhappiness are valid reasons for the Greenlanders to reject emigration even to Denmark, so long as they can earn an acceptable living in their native land. But man's ideas and wishes change quickly. The way of life that today's generation gladly embraces may appear wholly unacceptable to the next; and the time may not be too remote when Greenland's population, unless held rigidly stationary, will outstrip any possible development of its natural resources, making emigration the only alternative to pauperism and starvation. The Commission undoubtedly realizes this. It hopes, however, that such a crisis will never arise, but that later marriages resulting from prolonged education and training, and a rise in the Greenlanders' living standard through higher production and an increase in the average family income, will bring with them, as they have in some other countries, a decline in the birth rate large enough to check the galloping population and keep it relatively stable.[2]

A sophisticated population with easy access to contraceptive methods may attain such stability by deliberately controlling the number of children per family; but the Greenlanders are not sophisticated, and the long cold nights of winter, the relatively low economic standard hardly avoidable in most fishing communities, the paucity of amenities and distractions, and the traditional tolerance of premarital relations and illegitimate offspring all encourage a high rate of conception. It seems to me very unlikely that delayed legal marriages and a small increase in the family income will tip the scales against these factors. That will require agencies of greater weight, one of them, perhaps, a fuller realization by the Greenlanders themselves of the miseries of over-population and the means now available for checking it.

A rise in the family income not derived from some kind of government subsidy will need a more intense exploitation of Greenland's natural resources;[3]

[1]Did not the majority of the British settlers rescued from lonely Tristan da Cunha, in the South Atlantic, in 1961, when a volcanic eruption threatened to destroy their homes and their stock, quickly weary of the restlessness and confusion in the motherland, become sated with the glitter of Britain's "modernity", and return *en masse* to the simplicity and peace of their island home as soon as the eruption died down?

[2]Family Allowances (i.e. baby bonuses) and the government's housing program would seem to work in the contrary direction. For the latter see p. 144.

[3]An appreciable increase in the value of her products relative to imported goods would raise the average family income; but such an increase seems highly improbable as long as such products come from the sea only, and not also from land minerals.

and as the Commission well knew, the island, like certain wine-growing districts in France and Italy, is a one-crop region possessing, as far as we know today, one major resource only, the cod-fishery. The ten-year plan assumes that this fishery, supported to a limited extent by the shrimp industry, will provide an adequate economic base for at least ten years; and it therefore recommends that Denmark encourage the West Greenlanders to use larger boats and more modern equipment than they now possess, and to venture outside their fiords to the limit of their territorial waters, where fish are certainly more abundant. But no one can say how many months or years will elapse before they can handle these larger boats and equipment without European skippers and perhaps one or more skilled fishermen from Europe in every crew. One authority of whom I asked this question answered, brusquely, "25 to 100 years", but another was much less pessimistic.

There is another query that no one today can answer. After the islanders have learned to handle these larger vessels will they consent to stay at sea during both summer and winter months, as do foreign fishermen? Even for a people as hardy as Greenlanders the temptation to run for shore each evening, and to remain ashore in cold and stormy weather, will be well-nigh irresistible, so near are the fishing banks to their home towns. Yet unless they fish continuously, they may find it hard to compete on the world's markets with the German, Portuguese, French, and other fishermen who with large trawls sweep the extensive banks just outside Greenland's territorial waters during all or most months of the year, and harvest about nine times as many cod as the Greenlanders impale today on their hooks and haul in with their nets.[1]

A third question raises its head. Have the large trawls used by some of these foreign fishermen on the banks already skimmed off most of the large fish, as one biologist believes, and are they now draining away the immature ones, thus gravely depleting the stock? If so, will the diminishing numbers of cod jeopardize that expansion of the fisheries which is the main pillar of the ten-year plan?

Time alone will answer these questions. Meanwhile let us resume our analysis.

We remarked in several earlier passages (cf. pp. 31, 64, *et al.*) how the old life of the Greenlanders, and their present-day life in such places as Upernavik and Scoresbysund, imposed their dispersal along the coast in tiny groups, because seals cannot linger in large numbers at any one locality. An efficient cod-fishery, on the other hand, tended to draw the families out of their scattered coves into moderately sized settlements so that the canning and freezing plants might operate more continuously, ocean-going vessels collect their output and unload supplies, and the government justifiably invest large sums of money on docks and ship-repair works, water and power plants, houses and apartment blocks, schools and all the other amenities demanded by civilized communities. Since about 1925, therefore, West Greenland's inhabitants have been concentrating in the best fishing localities, and what began as a hesitant drift at the beginning of the century became a small but regular flow towards 1950. The 1948 Royal Commission recommended that the government deliberately try to

[1] In 1956 foreigners caught 340,000 tons of fish near the coasts of Greenland, Greenlanders only 26,000 (Christiansen, 1959, p. 328).

accelerate this flow in West Greenland by resettling about 2,000 natives from Upernavik, Umanak, and Qutdligssat in the north, and from Kap Farvel in the south, at Egedesminde, Godthåb, and Narssaq, leaving in their old homes only a few hunters and their families to gather in whatever seals were available; but the authorities decided that to relocate so many people voluntarily would require many years of careful preparation, and that for the moment the scheme was premature.

During the 1950 decade the main fishing settlements steadily expanded and absorbed most of the increase in West Greenland's population; but they failed to reduce the number of families dispersed in small outposts, where the incomes derived from fishing and sealing remained so wretched that the government had to augment them with liberal subsidies. The Summary issued by the 1960 Commission laid its finger on the main reason why these impoverished Greenlanders refused to abandon their outposts, namely, the scarcity of homes in the urbanized centres.

> "The development of the towns has not been able to keep pace with the desire of families to move to the towns, with the results that there are still many families who are unable to realize their desire to move." ('Sammenfatning af udvalgets forslag', 1964, p. 2).

Reviving, therefore, the suggestions of the 1948 Commission, it urged a crash home-building program and a speeding-up of the relocation of the outpost population, partly to mitigate their poverty and hardships and to draw their children into better schools, partly to further the expansion of the fishing industry. It recommended that the government evacuate, not these outlying settlers only, but most of the inhabitants of the two northern districts, Upernavik and Umanak, where fish had never been plentiful enough to support an industry and seals had become so scarce, especially at Umanak,[1] that a large percentage of the population was listlessly leaning on the government. It rejected the idea of dragooning any of the people to abandon their homes, for Denmark is a democratic country, and Greenland, now an integral part of Denmark, equally democratic; but it anticipated that by persuasion and propaganda, by providing the evacuees with better homes than they were then occupying, and by paying a premium on fish landed near the processing plants so that their collection would cost little or nothing, many families could be induced to make the plunge, and thereby contribute to a redistribution of the west coast's population more conformable with its economic potential. Such a readjustment, the Commission affirmed, would help to raise the living standard of the West Greenlanders, heighten their morale by relieving unemployment, and reduce the government's heavy expenditures for outpost transportation and welfare.

Relocation alone, however, cannot provide the key to every Greenland problem, for no conceivable expansion of the fishing industry will ever absorb all her manpower, or even resolve the impending crisis in North and East Greenland's swiftly growing hunting populations, which already strain the

[1] In the summer of 1964 seals were surprisingly abundant at Umanak. Should they continue to throng its waters in the years ahead, and their skins maintain their present high value, the authorities will probably reconsider the evacuation of many hunters and their families.

food resources of those regions. The latter, however, is a separate problem with which Denmark will grapple when it arises. Among the fisher-folk of populous West Greenland there will always be many men who dislike the "rolling to starboard and to larboard", who are unable to endure the heavy physical toil of fishing and kindred outdoor labours, but find satisfaction in quieter and less challenging tasks.[1] In the olden days every Greenland youth hunted seals and other game—or he starved; but modern life can be gentler and provide less strenuous occupations. What can it offer these young Greenlanders?

Some will become clerks, bookkeepers, and common labourers; others will take up carpentry, plumbing, electrical work and similar trades. Scores of Greenlanders perform these tasks today as efficiently as Europeans. A few hold higher jobs. The manager of the Radio Broadcasting Station is a Greenlander: so too are the Director of Schools, the Chief of Police, the editor and the printer of the fortnightly, bilingual newspaper *Atuagagdliutit* and, of course, most of the ordained clergy. But there are now more than 2,000 Danes,[2] among them highly trained engineers, architects and others with special skills, who every year in this period of frenzied construction flock into Greenland with the spring birds, work under high pressure throughout the frost-free season,[3] and migrate south again at the first heavy snows of winter. Greenlanders work alongside them and often perform the same tasks, but all too few possess the special skills, and this creates a certain amount of friction. Moreover, the Danish government, which is virtually the sole employer, pays Greenlanders lower wages than it pays the Danish workers, because the latter must forsake their families for five or six months and also pay heavy income and property taxes. This wage-differential too rankles in the minds of many Greenlanders, who have never felt the weight of direct taxes, although they suffer from the high costs of transporting goods to and from Greenland, and are burdened indirectly with the import duties on sugar and a few other "luxuries".[4] However, the authorities charged with working out the details of the ten-year plan are giving a very prominent place to education, and there are good grounds for hoping that with the rapidly increasing number of children now passing through the schools, and the greater facilities for higher education that will be available to them, Greenland two decades from now will be able to supply native professionals and technicians for nearly all the tasks the island demands, and in some fields perhaps a surplus. If a surplus should occur it can hardly fail to be beneficial, for the standard of Danish training is so high that these professionals would experience no difficulty in finding employment, if not

[1]"It is to be expected that the outcome of the easy access to paid work will be that the number of young people who become fishermen will not be sufficient for a satisfactory utilization of the existing fish population and of the fishing industry and the processing plant which have already been established or are being planned." ('Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland,' vol. 3, 1963, p. 62).

[2]In the summer of 1963 there were 2,643 Danish workers in Greenland.

[3]As in northern Canada and northern Alaska, many work twelve hours a day to swell their seasonal incomes.

[4]Greenland workers have well-organized trade unions which could strike for higher wages; but, as their leaders well know, this would create an all-round demand for wage increases which would raise the costs, and consequently the prices, of the Royal Greenland Trade Department, leaving the workers no better off than before.

in Greenland or Denmark, then in other parts of the world. Educational authorities, indeed, confidently expect this outcome.

> "As young Greenlanders are greatly interested in education and training, there is every reason to believe that the introduction of vocational guidance on the lines indicated above, concurrently with improved educational facilities, will yield very quick results. Such measures will not only contribute to solving an urgent political problem, viz. that an increasing number of Greenlanders will gradually be able to replace the people sent out from Denmark, but these measures also acquire both economic and social significance: more and more people will be guided into occupations of greater public utility." ('Uddannelsessituationen i Vestgrønland', vol. 3, 1963, p. 69).

Now that we have outlined and annotated the Commission's major recommendations let us briefly review a few minor ones.

Two deal with financial matters. Since Greenland is now an integral part of Denmark, the Commission pointed out, there appears to be no reason for retaining her special coinage and paper currency (p. 52); they should therefore be abolished. Furthermore, parliament should convert the Government Savings Bank of Greenland into a self-owning institution controlled by a government-appointed committee of which two members would be members also of the Provincial Council. Thereafter whatever profits accrued should be donated to organizations existing for the welfare of the Greenlanders. The second recommendation, if adopted, would create in Greenland a genuine people's savings bank operating on strict socialistic principles, and that should make it popular with the Greenland people, who have never completely shuffled off the traditional custom of doing and sharing many things in common.

The Commission cast a side glance, also, at land tenure, and a majority of its members upheld the historical view that the people of Greenland own all land in common (p. 119); they suggested however, that in the growing towns, where individual citizens might be tempted to claim valuable lots on the ground of long occupation or personal improvement, municipalities should be given authority to charge rent, which they would then expend for public purposes. A minority, on the other hand, held that the time had come to establish private ownership of land, as in European Denmark and other countries.

In still another section of its Summary the Commission emphasized the need for children's institutions, youth clubs, homes for the aged, and halls in which to hold public meetings. Some of its members, one suspects, viewed with apprehension the social upheaval which the revolution in the island's economy is creating, and insisted on the promotion of new activities and new diversions to avert idleness, juvenile delinquency and other evils.

The new "Greenland Council" of ten members, five of them Danes and five Greenlanders, with a competent secretariat (p. 162), is now working out the details of the ten-year plan for the cabinet's approval and parliament's ratification, neither of which seems to be in doubt. Denmark is to allocate for it, over the ten-year period, 4,200 million kroner (more than half a billion U.S. dollars), no light burden for a country whose inhabitants number little more than 4½ million, carry heavy taxes already, and are fighting the rising costs of living. It means a subsidy of over 12,000 kroner annually (U.S. $1,750) to every non-Danish man, woman, and child now living in Greenland;

and this does not include the family allowance, or yearly baby bonus, of 220 kroner for every under-age child, to which every Greenland mother became entitled from 1 January 1964.

1966 is the zero year for the plan—G.60, as it is designated in official circles; and when Denmark actually launches it, West Greenland throughout the frost-free season will be a seething hive of activity from one end to the other. Even in the summer of 1964 its atmosphere throbbed with the din of hills being levelled or evenly graded, roads and water-mains drilled through the hard granite, rock-laden trucks chugging their way to crushing plants, and cranes clanking long blocks of concrete up to the third storeys of embryonic apartment houses. Every morning about 7 a.m., before the long main street of Godthåb began to choke with school-children and trucks, one dynamite blast followed another as construction foremen ignited their fuses to shatter the solid rock that was obstructing their operations. In Egedesminde I met a naval architect who was examining the shoreline for a new dockyard that would handle vessels of 420 tons, and in Narssarssuaq I made the acquaintance of an electrical engineer who had just erected a new power-line.

The ten-year program will quadruple this activity. The huge investments in canneries, docks, boats, dwellings, schools and the many other requirements of flourishing fishing communities will give work to many Danes, but also to every Greenlander who is willing and able to accept a construction job. What is almost equally important, it will provide the younger Greenlanders with broad, practical experience to supplement the instruction they receive in the technical schools. For ten years too, if there is no slackening in the program, it will stimulate many industries in Denmark itself; it will animate that country's ship-building, its timber trade, its steel and cement plants, and many other enterprises.

National economic and social programs, like ordinary business enterprises, move forward amid swells and depressions, and Denmark can expect many ups-and-downs, many successes and reverses, in the execution of her ten-year plan. These however, will not seriously influence its ultimate success—or failure. That unbreakably hinges, so far as one can foresee today, on a vast expansion of Greenland's fishing industry. If the shoals of cod rapidly and consistently diminish during the ten years, whether through excessive exploitation on the fishing banks, an imperceptible or barely perceptible reduction in the strength of the Irminger branch of the Gulf Stream, or any other cause, the plan will fail, or at least fall short of complete success, and much of the sacrifice of the Danish people will have been fruitless. It will suffer the same fate if the West Greenlanders refrain from committing themselves heart and soul to fishing on the open ocean, as do their foreign competitors, but restrict themselves to inshore fishing and rely on the government to make good its deficiencies. If they grasp their opportunity, however, and the cod, though decreasing perhaps in actual numbers, diminish so slowly that for ten or fifteen years their decline hardly affects the catch, then by the end of that period the Greenlanders should have progressed so far educationally that a sufficient number of them will be able to emigrate to Denmark and painlessly diffuse among its European inhabitants, and this emigration, combined with a decline in the birth-rate, may more nearly balance the population with Greenland's

natural resources. The plan is a gigantic lottery, and the stakes are high; but Denmark is carefully working out her program, and will unquestionably strive her utmost to carry it through.

One evening last summer (1964) I stood on the deck of the *Kununguaq*—"Little Knud" (Rasmussen), the very comfortable passenger steamer which from spring to late fall plies north and south along the west coast of Greenland. The chief engineer joined me, and together we gazed in silence at the little town of Holsteinsborg perched on its spur of rocks a hundred yards ahead. I said at last:

"You have been spending a lot of money in Greenland these last few years".

"Yes", he answered. "This is the tenth summer I have spent up here, and in that time I have seen great changes. We have indeed spent a vast amount of money; and the more we spend, it seems to me, the more many of the Greenlanders criticize us. Some of our Danish tax-payers too are complaining; and I myself sometimes wonder. Yet I am convinced that we are doing right. Hitler spent far more than we have, and what could he show for it afterwards except widespread destruction and misery? We at least can point to something"; and he nodded in the direction of the dock and the shipyard, the technical school, and the comfortable homes glowing with electric light.

He paused a few seconds, then continued:

"This new ten-year program will be a heavy burden on us Danes; for the Greenlanders themselves, as you know, pay no taxes. Nevertheless, I approve it. We have to go forward."

The great lottery is now beginning. Its purpose is noble, its methods irreproachable. With open eyes, and with the support of its people—so far as an outsider can judge—Denmark's government is casting its bread upon nature's uncertain waters. Let us pray that it will return before many days.

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