



Rear Admiral L. O. Colbert, former Director, Washington Office of the Arctic Institute.

## L. O. Colbert

On December 31, 1958 Rear Admiral Colbert retired from the Directorship of the Institute's Washington Office, a post he had held since February 1952 and to the responsibilities of which he brought the fruits of a long life of scientific and administrative distinction.

The Washington Office had been established scarcely a year when its then Director, Lincoln Washburn, gave up his close association with the Institute to carry forward his long-time interest in geomorphological field research. The task of replacing him in the Institute family seemed an impossible one, yet, by great good fortune, his leaving us coincided with the retirement of Admiral Colbert from government service as Director of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Because of his many seasons of scientific work in Alaska and Alaskan waters and his interest in arctic oceanography and related disciplines, Lee Colbert was persuaded to apply his wide experience to the needs of the young and growing Arctic Institute.

The prestige and respect he had earned through association with a wide circle of scientific and administrative colleagues in Washington immediately redounded to the Institute's credit. The polar regions were at that time becoming intensely spotlighted, and Admiral Colbert was able to bring to our objectives the interest and wise counsel of many individuals and agencies, the benefits of which are embodied in our present research program. It is fair to say also that the "meetings of minds" that he stimulated enhanced not only our own scientific objectives but served to acquaint our counsellors with each others' programs, thus providing a useful catalytic function and the strengthening of arctic programs carried out by other national groups.

To the sea and its problems Admiral Colbert brought eager enthusiasm, and his efforts in our interests and the expansion of our long-time association with the Office of Naval Research and in the Institute's advisory role in the research programs of the Arctic Research Laboratory at Point Barrow, Alaska. Always a strong advocate of fundamental tools for the scientist, he gave much of himself to the problems of compilation and publication of the *Arctic Bibliography*, seven volumes of which reached the scientific community during his directorship. No less was he instrumental in the appearance of the Institute's volume, *Arctic Research*, to which he contributed the chapters "Geophysical Research in Alaska" and "Tidal Data in the North American Arctic". If these contributions are tangible monuments to his devotion to Institute affairs, the intangibles must be the gratitude of more than one hundred and sixty principal investigators sponsored by the Institute whose field programs assisted and guided to completion. Nor did the Admiral's encouragement benefit only the senior investigators, for these mature scientists he took somewhat for granted. Far more he relished the opportunity to develop the talents of younger men and to steer an ever increasing flow of scientific potential toward the future needs of polar research.

Those of us in the Institute who have had the pleasure of close and happy association with Admiral Colbert will wish him well in his "retirement", for we know that there is no such word in his vocabulary. Rather we relish the prospect of his wise counsel and active interest in Institute affairs for many years to come.

WALTER A. WOOD