



(Photo: Christian Vibe)

Van Hauen expedition dog-team, with view across Ellesmere Island west of Bache Peninsula.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### LANGTHEN OG NORDPAA.

By CHRISTIAN VIBE. Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1948. 199 pp.; map, ill.

The title of this book can be translated as "Northward and Far Away". It is an account, in non-scientific terms, of the Danish Thule and Ellesmere Land Expedition, 1939-40, designed for the popular Danish market. It is handsomely printed and illustrated with excellent photographs, the author's own.

This expedition began just before the start of the second world war and ended after the invasion of Denmark in April 1940. Mainly for this reason, very little has been heard of its activities, and it may be useful to summarize its course as described in this book. The members were: James van Hauen, leader and surveyor; J. Troelsen, geologist; Christian Vibe, zoologist; G. Thorlaksson, botanist, and Niels Rasmussen, film photographer.

Early in August 1939, winter quarters were established at Neqé, north of Thule, and the remainder of the summer and fall spent in journeys away from the base

for zoological, botanical and geological purposes, and to obtain supplies of walrus and seal meat for the winter. Van Hauen and Troelsen made a trip to Marshall Bay on the north coast of Inglefield Land; Vibe, with several Polar Eskimo natives, went on a caribou hunt in the interior regions of Inglefield Fjord; some time was spent in hunting seal on the new ice; and finally the whole expedition moved south to Thule on a Christmas visit.

Preparations for the spring sledging, the meat of the expedition program, occupied the early part of 1940. On March 13, Troelsen, with two sledges and two natives, left Neqé in advance, in order to do some geological work at Bache Peninsula on Ellesmere Island. The main body, together with accompanying native sledges (altogether 17 sledges!) took off on March 21, travelling by Etah, Cape Sunrise and Refuge Harbour (where a cache had been laid the year before by ship), across Smith Sound to Bache Peninsula. Two sledges (Rasmussen and one native) left the

group temporarily to lay caches for the return journey to Cape Ingersoll and Cape Calhoun. At Bache Peninsula four of the accompanying sledges left for the south to hunt bear.

The party left Bache Peninsula for the west on March 28, arriving at the head of Bay Fjord on April 1, after a difficult time spent in negotiating Hell Cleft where the glacier edge almost closed the normal sledge passage. Several of the accompanying native sledges left the expedition on the way. At Bay Fjord the expedition split into two parties; van Hauen, Troelsen and Rasmussen, with four Eskimos (one of them a woman) turned north up Eureka Sound, explored Hare and Otto Fjords in Grant Land, Mökka Fjord in Axel Heiberg Island (at the head of which they discovered a large lake which they named Lake Maersk), and Canyon Fjord in Grinnell Land. The return route was through Greely Fjord, across another new lake (thirstily named Lake Tuborg), down into Hall Basin and so south to Neqé. This northern party took four sledges and sixty-two dogs.

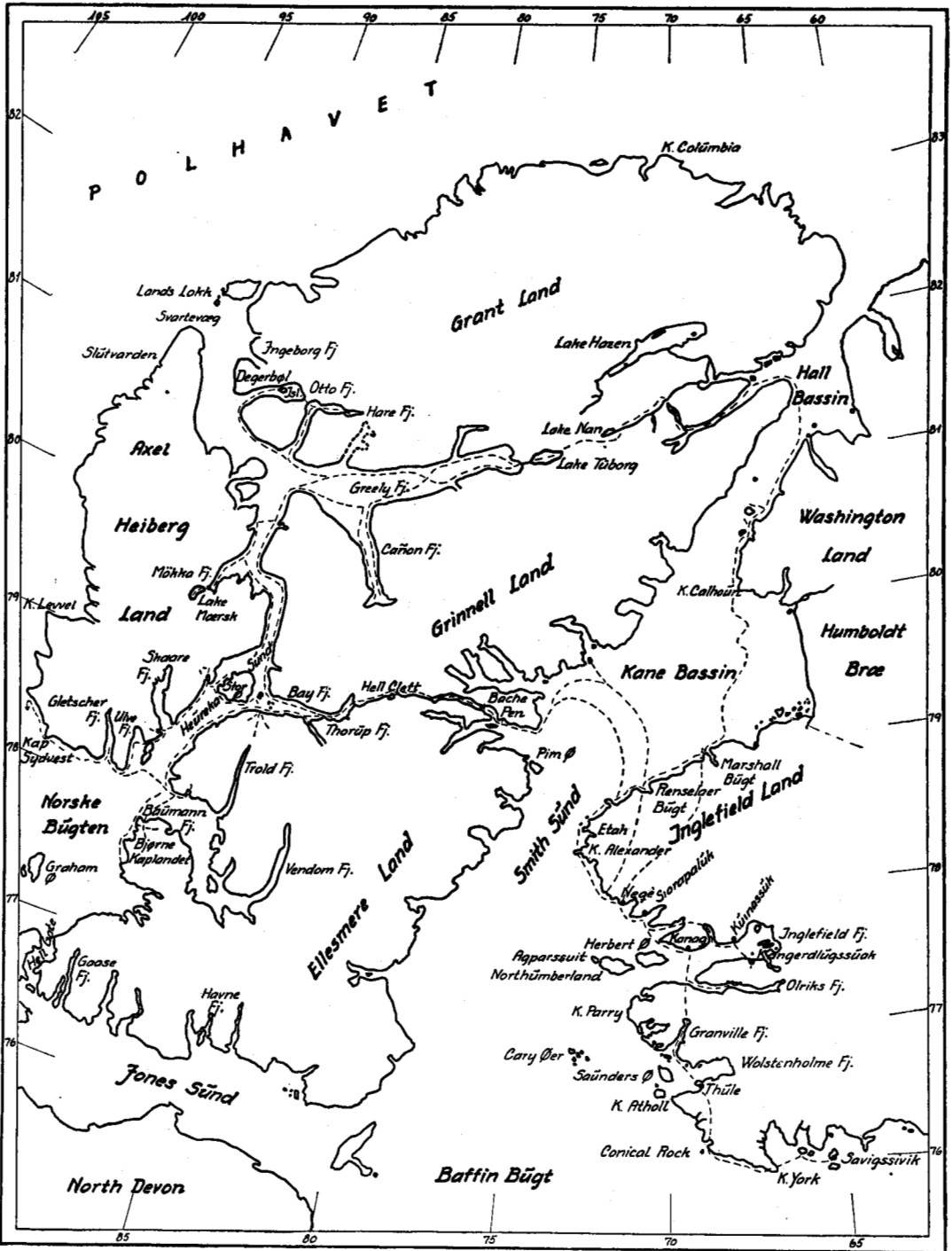
The southern party, consisting of Vibe and Thorlaksson and three natives (again one of them a woman), with three sledges and forty dogs, went southwest out of Eureka Sound, explored the south and southwest coasts of Axel Heiberg, crossed Norwegian Bay to Baumann Fjord, and returned to Neqé the same way they had come, by Bay Fjord and Flagler Bay. The two parties met again on May 26, not far from base.

Popular accounts of expeditions are often larded with much sensational nonsense which is extremely trying to the honest reader. Magister Vibe has managed to avoid this, though there are occasional traces of these bowings to the gallery. There is much interesting material on the birds and mammals, including a simple statement of the purpose and method of his investigation of the fauna of the sea floor on the walrus banks. There is mention of a regulation in force in the Thule district, which might well be given serious consideration in Canada, namely that a hunter must first harpoon a walrus before shooting it with a rifle, thus avoiding the loss of animals in summer, due to sinking. The

winter quarters of the expedition were in one of the most northerly breeding areas of the arctic tern, and of the rare Sabine's gull; and there is a quietly dramatic moment, immediately after a near-accident when the dogs get out of control in caribou country, when the first snow-bird makes its appearance in April. The description of finding tracks of many arctic foxes over Smith Sound, pointing towards Greenland, is of interest to zoologists, as are the accounts of the musk-oxen seen on Ellesmere and Axel Heiberg, the behaviour of the wolves, and the finding of butterfly and daddy-long-legs larvae during the winter dormancy.

We are introduced to some interesting personalities. There is Kutsikitsiq, who says good-naturedly: "Don't write too much about us. White men keep on running around with notebook and pencil, as though they were incapable of remembering anything, and they write down a whole mass of trivialities; and when they go home they feed the people with a lot of lies about us and have themselves been great heroes. You will perhaps do the same and give us all something to laugh about, till the stones come rolling down the mountains, when the priest tells us what you have written about us and about yourself. Lend me your pencil, and I will scratch it all out, for it is surely mostly lies. . . ." There is Hans Nielsen, manager of the colony of Thule, who has some very pointed advice to give in a farewell speech to the expedition after the Christmas celebration: "The less your work is publicized in the newspapers at home, the more will we think of it up here; for it has happened often that those who have come home with important results have been passed by in silence, while others have been received as great men." There is Odaq, Peary's companion on his north pole journey, and Pualuna, Cook's companion, who not only appears to have confirmed the general judgment on Cook's north pole claim, but also has a story to tell about a polar bear which took a bite out of the seat of Cook's pants!

The author has some very complimentary remarks to make about the



Routes of the van Hauen Expedition in Greenland and Canada, 1939-41. (Reproduced by courtesy of the author and publishers.)

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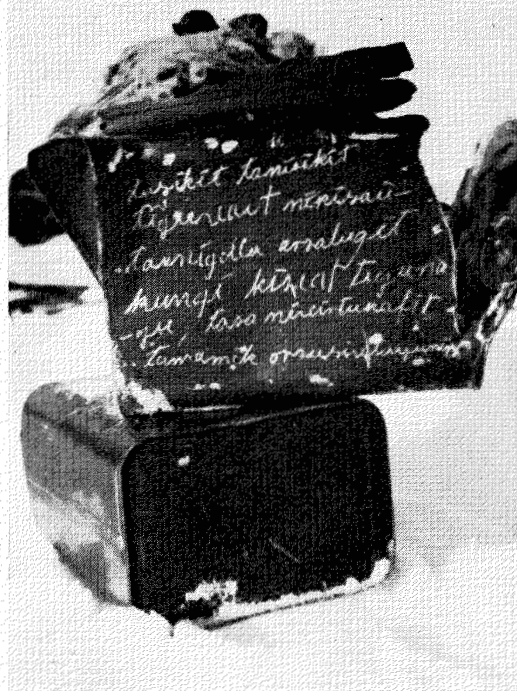
Royal Canadian Mounted Police, whose unoccupied base at Bache Peninsula was visited by the expedition. Two R.C.M.P. cairns were examined by the southern party on Axel Heiberg Island, one built by Inspector Joy (then Sergeant Joy) on May 14, 1926, and one by Stallworthy on April 23, 1932. Stallworthy's patrol was one of two journeys (the other under R. W. "Paddy" Hamilton) made in 1932 in search of the German expedition of 1930 (Krueger and Bjare). Vibe's Eskimos described Krueger's travelling technique as "very imperfect", and explained that after this disaster the Polar Eskimos had decided that in the future no Eskimo should go alone with any white man's expedition; that there should always be at least one Eskimo for each white man.

The expedition brought back specimens for various museums in Copenhagen, zoological, botanical and geological. For most of the members it was a training expedition, and a very successful one. Vibe's account contains many intriguing moments and stories, some of which will serve to close this review: (1) Vibe's efforts to explain to Inotersuak and Naduk why they must not shoot musk-oxen; and the Eskimo point of view "yes, but . . . the Canadian police don't understand about musk-oxen . . . look, wolves eat many musk-oxen . . . I will shoot two wolves for every musk-ox." All to no avail; the law stands. (2) The message in Greenlandic Eskimo, written on a pemmican-tin, announcing the invasion of Denmark, for the benefit of the southern party: "The Germans are robbing the Danes of all their meat,

### FRIDTJOF NANSEN OG KNUD RASMUSSEN: EN SLÆGTSSTUDIE

By EIGIL KNUTH. Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1948. pp. 48.

In this genealogical study Eigil Knuth has shown rather convincingly that Norway's and Denmark's two most gifted and inspired arctic travellers and writers descended from a common Dutch ancestor, Gert Adriansen Geelmuyden, who died in Bergen, Norway, in 1701.



(Photo: Chr. Vibe)

Message to van Hauen Expedition written in Greenlandic Eskimo on old pemmican can. It announces the Nazi invasion of Denmark.

but the King is safe. There is no more kerosene in the store." (3) The celebration in Bay Fjord before the two parties separated, when the wine was impatiently eaten frozen, like candy. (4) The difficulty of explaining to the Polar Eskimo that soil has value in more southern lands, that it can produce food, just as the sea does for the Eskimo. (5) The deep impression which Thorlaksson's singing of Icelandic ballads made on the Eskimos, causing Inoterssuak several times to suggest that Thorlaksson marry a Polar Eskimo girl, so that his genius should not be lost to the stock.

M. J. DUNBAR.

Although in character as well as in outlook and appearance Nansen and Rasmussen were as different as two men could be, both, from their earliest youth, were deeply imbued with the desire for exploration, adventure and travel. For Nansen the ultimate motive was scientific discovery; for Rasmussen it was love of travel among primitive peoples. Both possessed to an unusual degree the ability to inspire and make others share in their discoveries. Both were great leaders of