

John H. Marsh has done a masterly job of describing the rush and bother that resulted when, shortly before Christmas 1947, H.M.S.S. *Transvaal* was ordered to sea on secret orders which, when later examined proved to require the occupation of Prince Edward Island and Marion Island. Before the vessel left, stores, buildings and personnel had been collected together hurriedly so that a permanent settlement could be established on the islands. Practically nothing was known about conditions on them, and as South Africa had not taken an active part in polar exploration, even the obtaining of suitable clothing and buildings was a major undertaking. It was found that the only chart available had been made by H.M.S. *Challenger* in 1873, under the command of Captain G. S. Nares. Students of polar history will note with interest that the work of Nares has come to the fore in 1948 both from the far south and the far north, reminding one of far-ranging exploration by the Royal Navy in the nineteenth century.

The main purpose of occupying the Prince Edward and Marion islands was to establish a weather station and to confirm the transfer of authority over them from the United Kingdom to South Africa. As the book describes so vividly, there were times when it looked as if any sort of a landing on the islands would be impossible, and even when the first party was put ashore, it seemed improbable that a permanent settlement could be achieved. There was a certain amount of musical comedy atmosphere about the undertaking since officials in South Africa were waiting anxiously for

news of the occupation of the islands while the H.M.S.S. *Transvaal* was tossing in violent seas, with waves of more than 25 feet and a wind of Beaufort scale 8. Eight days after leaving Cape Town a landing was finally made on Marion Island. Later, one landing was made on Prince Edward Island.

The terrain of the islands is high and rugged and there is much swamp, although grass exists and may be suitable for sheep raising. The fauna include King penguins, seals and sea lions, but insects appeared to be absent. The islands have long had the reputation of being "bleak, boisterous and foggy" and the experience of the South African expedition justified this description. There is every assurance that the staff of the meteorological station will face an interesting and stimulating time since violent changes in the weather appear usual.

The establishment of a first class meteorological station on Marion Island, in combination with the Australian stations on Heard and Macquarie Islands will help to close an important gap in our knowledge of ocean weather in the southern hemisphere. The Prince Edward Islands despite their difficult climate are not truly antarctic since they are in latitude 47° S, equivalent to that of Newfoundland in the northern hemisphere.

No Pathway Here is illustrated with many photographs taken by members of the expedition, including one showing its rather chilly personnel celebrating the annexation of the islands by drinking their Christmas champagne.

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TO THE ARCTIC.

The story of northern exploration from earliest times to the present. Jeannette Mirsky. Introduction by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. Toronto, The Ryerson Press. 1948. \$5.00.

To the Arctic! was first published in 1934 as *To the North!* but was withdrawn shortly after publication because of a threatened action for libel by the late Dr. Frederick A. Cook. The present

volume is a revision of the 1934 book, with material added to bring it down to the present day.

After a brief introductory discussion of arctic scenery and some of the reasons which have prompted men to explore the north, the author commences her long task by discussing the Greeks and Vikings. There follow accounts of pre-Columbian and post-Columbian attempts to reach Cathay, summaries of Dutch explorations in the Arctic and an

account of the exploration of Hudson Bay and Baffin Bay. Two chapters are used to give an excellent summary of Russian expansion into Siberia, of Bering's voyages, the story of Semen Dezhnev and others, ending with Wrangel's sledge journey.

British exploration in the nineteenth century occupies three chapters, with much of the space given to Franklin's voyages and the Franklin Search. In a discussion of "The Route to the North", the stages by which the open polar sea was reached through Kane Basin and Robeson Channel are described with a fitting tribute to the magnificent work of the Nares Expedition of 1875-76. Other chapters deal with the exploration

of Greenland from Hans Egede in 1721 to Gino Watkins and Courtauld. The last four chapters summarize the search for the Northeast and Northwest Passages; exploration of Jones Sound and Beaufort Sea; Peary's achievement of the Pole, and Flying in the Arctic. The penultimate chapter includes a statement headed "The truth about Cook" which outlines the views of the author as to where Dr. Cook really was when he claimed to be making his remarkable journey to the North Pole.

To the Arctic! is well illustrated with photographs and maps. Appendices include a list of the Franklin search parties and a chronology of northern exploration. T.L.L.

ROSTER OF ARCTIC SPECIALISTS

The Arctic Institute of North America is compiling a roster of persons with Arctic experience. It is to include scientists, traders, missionaries, administrators, explorers and others with field experience in any part of the Arctic. The Directors of the Project would be glad to receive the names of any persons who should be added to the roster. Information may be addressed to the Director, Arctic Institute Roster, 1530 P Street Northwest, Washington, D.C.

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NORTHERN RESEARCH REPORTS

Archaeology

In November 1947 the National Museum of Canada set about organizing an international archaeological expedition to excavate some ancient Eskimo ruins near the two weather stations that had been erected that summer in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, one at Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island, the other in Slidre Fiord, Eureka Sound, on the west coast of Ellesmere Island. It invited Dr. Henry B. Collins, of the United States National Museum in Washington, to excavate the sites in Resolute Bay; and it asked the National

Museum of Denmark to provide a Danish archaeologist for the excavation of the sites in Slidre Fiord, which lies on an overland route to North Greenland. Furthermore it planned that either its Director, Dr. F. J. Alcock, or the Chief of its Division of Anthropology, Dr. D. Jenness, would visit the two sites while they were being excavated, and that all specimens recovered would ultimately be divided between the three National museums.

Unfortunately the National Museum of Canada was not able to arrange for the transportation of an archaeologist to