

across Canada. These new archives and hitherto unused or little used records in long established archives will provide solid sources for the spate of new research into women's history in Canada of which this book is symptomatic.

Barbara Lazenby Craig
Archives of Ontario

Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic. RICHARD J. DIUBALDO. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978. xii, 274 p. ill., maps ISBN \$18.95.

This volume could serve as a text book for explorers, politicians and civil servants. It could instruct explorers on how not to have successful relationships with the Government of Canada and it could show politicians and civil servants how not to deal with explorers, especially explorers of such strong individuality and undeviating determination as the likes of Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962).

In the 1920s, as the author mentions, Stefansson was one of the most famous celebrities in Canada and he remained one of the internationally best known authorities on the polar regions, and particularly the Canadian Arctic, until his death. He stimulated more interest in the Arctic than any other individual of his time as an explorer, pioneer Eskimo ethnologist, writer and theorist. He ended his life the friend of the famous, the sort of distinguished man of learning and adventure who was invited to the White House to meet visiting heads of state.

Stefansson actually spent remarkably few of his eighty two years in Canada. He was born at Arnes, Manitoba, a small Icelandic community on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg but climatic disasters drove his family to emigrate to the United States before he was two. His life became a realization of the legend of "America the land of promise". His formal education began in a one room school from which his intellectual abilities led him to two prairie universities, North Dakota and Iowa, and eventually on scholarships to the eastern athenaeum, Harvard University. In 1906, he was suddenly offered the position of anthropologist on the Anglo-American Polar Expedition just as he was about to join a British Museum expedition destined for Africa. He accepted and for the next twenty years his life became interwoven with every diverse aspect of the Canadian Arctic, the exploration of its extent, the study of its aboriginal peoples, the examination of its climate and nature, and not least its political significance to the Dominion.

Stefansson went on three major expeditions to the Arctic; the Anglo-American Polar Expedition of 1906-07; the Stefansson-Anderson Expedition of 1908-12, sponsored chiefly by the American Museum of Natural History; and the great Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18, of which Stefansson was the official leader. It is on this third expedition that this book chiefly focuses; the first two are rightly placed as preliminary studies of what went right and wrong for Stefansson personally, and the expedition as a whole, from 1913 to 1918 and afterwards. For despite considerable accomplishments much did go wrong with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, and what went wrong eventually made Vilhjalmur Stefansson "persona non grata" in official Ottawa for most of the last forty years of his long life. As one director of the Geological Survey, R.W. Brock, remarked, most lengthy polar expeditions have rows which are forgotten when they return home. But the animosities generated on the 1913-18 Expedition flourished, poisoned lives, and did not cease until the protagonists died.

Diubaldo's study examines what contributed to the successes and failures of Stefansson's three major expeditions. It is an examination of federal attitudes, policies and procedures and their relationship to an extraordinary intelligent, resourceful, determined egoist. At the very conclusion of his autobiography the octogenarian

Stefansson wrote, rather chillingly: "Whatever others may think after reading these pages, I know what I have experienced, and I know what it has meant to me", before quoting the Book of Ecclesiastes, "Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works. . . ."

That personal outlook lies at the very crux of *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic*. It accounts for Stefansson's virtuoso successes as an explorer, as the exponent of living off the land as the eskimos did, in his interpretation of "The Friendly Arctic". It also accounts for his administrative failures as an expedition leader and the disasters experienced by the Hudson's Bay Reindeer Company and the Wrangel Island Expedition of the 1920s. Diubaldo remarks, "Stef—a genius in many respects—had great shortcomings when it came to dealings with others". Indeed he had, and his greatest single failure was the failure of his relations with the wife of his second-in-command, Rudolph Anderson, for this led to one of the bitterest, most vicious and long-lived of polar vendettas, described with some exaggeration by one of Stefansson's biographers, D.M. Le Bourdais, as the feud which froze the Canadian Arctic.

Diubaldo's excellent monograph is to be especially welcomed not only as an addition to the history of the Canadian North but also as a contribution to the literature of Canadian public administration. It is supported by the apparatus of scholarship—extensive footnotes (134 for Chapter 7 alone), a large bibliography, maps, photographs and a satisfactory index, and it reads well. The influence of Stefansson's personality permeates every chapter giving the book a degree of human interest and drama too infrequently—alas!—found in academic volumes published by university presses. Nevertheless, the account of Stefansson's allegiance over the question of the sovereignty of Wrangel Island is a little confusing and the account of the reindeer company's evolution in Chapter 7 is vague in certain passages. Also, the book would benefit from larger and better maps.

When Richard Diubaldo began research on what has evoked into *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic*, this reviewer was a new Archivist of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Diubaldo's investigations gave truth to a variation on the old theme, "If you become a teacher by your pupils you'll be taught". One useful lesson learned then was that usually government correspondence is a reciprocal activity, and that files closed in the records of one department may be freely accessible in the records of another. The papers of the Department of External Affairs, for example, may be restricted for as close as forever as humans could contrive, but the records of the defunct Department of the Interior might open to all who cared to look at them, and the Department of the Interior files might contain copies of almost all the Department of External Affairs memoranda and correspondence concerning the Wrangel Island affair. It was a useful and fascinating discovery, but then Vilhjalmur Stefansson and his relationship with the Canadian Arctic was never any less than interesting.

John A. Bovey
Provincial Archives of British
Columbia