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"SUMARNÓTT" (A Summer's Night) by Jón Stefánsson, one of Iceland's leading artists, reproduced from a colored lithographic print by Ragnar Jónsson of Reykjavik. The original painting, depicting the luminous serenity of an Icelandic summer's night, has for over a decade hung in the reception room of the President of Iceland.

The Icelandic Canadian, published at 868 Arlington St., Winnipeg 3. — Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.



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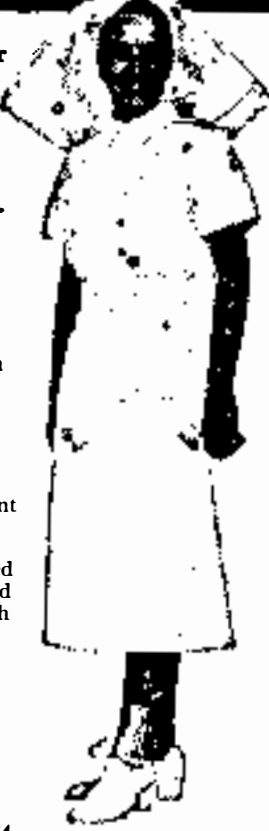
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# The Icelandic Canadian

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Autumn 1960

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## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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## EDITORIAL

## COLORED LITHOGRAPHS OF ICELANDIC PAINTINGS

A book printer and publisher in Reykjavík, Ragnar Jónsson, has produced lithographs of selected paintings by contemporary artists in Iceland. A twenty page brochure has been published which contains photographs of thirty-four paintings with appropriate notes on each, and pictures of the artists with brief biographical sketches. The notes and sketches are in both English and Icelandic.

Ragnar Jónsson and fifteen of the artists have decided to donate a set of the lithographs to the University of Manitoba. Other lithographs, as produced, will be added to the collection.

The donors deserve our highest commendation for this worthy gift, not only because of the inherent merit of each painting but also because it reveals the value which cultural leaders in Iceland place upon the Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba.

The men behind the movement felt that more should be done than merely donate the lithographs to the university. Arrangements were made that Rev. Bragi Friðriksson, who a few years ago served Lutheran congregations in Manitoba, bring the lithographs with him "vestur um haf", and, under the auspices of The Icelandic National League, exhibit them in Icelandic districts in Canada and the United States.

These reproductions are colored lithographic prints and are remarkably well done. They are of the same size as the originals and in appearance so close that the untrained eye would hardly detect that they are prints. They were on display in both the First Lutheran Church and the Unitarian Church in Winnipeg, and all who saw them enthused.

Artists in Iceland represent the modern as well as the classic school of thought in art, and among the paintings are to be seen realistic reproductions of beautiful scenery and studied moods as well as abstractions which give the viewer a chance to picture to himself what the artist had in mind.

The Icelandic Canadian is deeply indebted to Rev. Bragi Friðriksson for giving permission to reproduce pictures of the lithographs. The first one selected, which appears on the front cover, is "Sumarnótt", "A Summer's Night", by Jón Stefánsson.

The sketch in the brochure on Jón Stefánsson begins as follows:

"Jón Stefánsson has often, and with much justice, been called the historian among Icelandic painters. His subjects are generally mere frames which he fills in with his own philosophical thoughts and his memories of Icelandic national life and history".

The note on the painting follows:  
"A Summer's Night is one of the most beautiful and best known paintings of Stefánsson. For over a decade now it has decorated the wall of the reception room in the residence of the President of Iceland at Bessastaðir. Probably the luminous serenity of an Icelandic summer's night has never been so perfectly rendered."

Other reproductions will from time to time appear on the front cover of the Magazine.

These lithographs are another facade in that beautiful structure which, in our dreaming, is building across the ocean. As long as it remains clear and inspiring no one needs despair.

## Canada's National Birthday

The First of July, last, provided an opportunity for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, through its International Service, to release through 289 outlets around the world a specially-prepared recording, entitled "We Are This Land", marking Canada's 93rd birthday.

This broadcast told the story of Canada through people, who briefly sketched what part their race played in developing the country and what special contribution they have made. Spokemen for the following ethnic groups took part: Indians, Eskimos, French, Scots, English, Jews, Ukrainians, and Icelanders. Various professions and occupations were represented by, a farmer, a painter, a musician, a writer, as well as a married couple describing typical Canadian family life. The program was rounded off by a talk by His Excellency, Major-General G. P. Vanier, Governor-General of Canada. The program was narrated by Mr. Blair Fraser, and produced by Mr. Edwin W. Devlin of the C.B.C.

Mr. Grettir Leo Johannson was the spokesman for the Icelanders and the following is the context of his script:

"My name is Grettir Leo Johannson. I was born in Winnipeg of Icelandic parents.

My people, the Icelandic Canadians, entered Canadian history in large numbers during the settling of the prairies after Confederation. But our first visit dates back to the year 1000 A.D., when Leifur, son of Eric the Red who had settled in Greenland, discovered the North American continent. Three years later, Thorfinnur Karlsefni sailed from Greenland for the New World and founded a settlement. During the winter of 1004 his son Snorri, the first European child on this continent, was born. This first settlement had to be abandoned, but the Icelandic people preserved the story of their early connection with this country in their famous Sagas.

When in the 19th Century they again sailed for the New World, they gave their settlement in Nova Scotia the name MARKLAND, the name Thorfinnur had given it nine centuries previously; and they named their first weekly newspaper in Winnipeg LEIFUR.

Canadians of Icelandic origin cherish their racial traditions of law and liberty.

With the other Nordic people, we have made ourselves very much at home in this Northern land. We are part of its people, of its history, and of its culture."

## FJALLKONAN



MRS. DORIS JOHNSON

## *The Address Of The Maid Of The Mountains*

delivered at Gimli, Manitoba, at the Icelandic-Day Celebration, August 1, 1960, by DORIS JOHNSON, wife of Hon. George Johnson, Minister of Health and Public Welfare.

### My Beloved Children:

Today, as so often before, I have an opportunity of addressing you, and bringing you greetings from your relatives and friends who dwell with me.

I rejoice that even after you have lived eighty-eight years in this country, I can still speak to you in our

"Beloved heart-warming language,  
Every tongue fairer".

"Ástkæra, ylhýra málið,  
og allri rödd fegra."

as Jonas sang.

This day, which you consecrate to my memory, is and always will be the best proof of how deep-rooted the Icelandic heritage is in our hearts. No distance whether of time or space has been able to destroy it.

This brings me happiness beyond words. If your forests could send forth echoes like the cliffs of Iceland the air would have resounded with my strains of music from the very first days of arrival to the present time.

I know you have always discerned the messages in those strains, and that they are kept in your hearts as holy treasures. That is why the saga of your colonization is so beautiful and noteworthy. That is why you have found it easier to surmount various obstacles in your path. Without losing sight of what was dearest to you from your native land, you have builded your own bridges across the seas, and with confidence you have entered into the way of life in the West.

It is a pleasure to me to recall your victories, many and splendid, especially in studies at the universities in this country, ever since your pioneer days. That record is outstanding. I rejoice in your achievements, throughout the years, in the publication of newspapers, books and periodicals. Your maintenance of schools to preserve the Icelandic language has now a remarkable history, and the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba bears the clearest witness to your performance in that important field. Your church activities have done much to preserve the best in the culture you brought with you, and the Icelandic National League has also, since it was formed, maintained strong bonds with the home country. Much more might be recounted but in a short address that is not possible. Your history will, in course of time, record it.

While I express my deep felt thanks to those of you who from the first days of settlement have remained loyal to me and at the same time have won acclaim in your foster land, I wish to point out that your former native land is no longer remote and isolated. The awesome Atlantic Ocean is no longer an obstacle to those who travel from country to country. The bridge across it spans the vast blue spaces of the skies. Travelling that formerly required a month is now made in a single day. In my heart I cherish the hope that the new bridge may be destined to link your minds and hearts forever with the nation of your origin, as visits



between the two grow more frequent. It is a joyful thought, joyous as life itself on a lovely summer day.

In the years to come I shall continue to look towards the west. With open arms I shall always welcome anyone who seeks to come home. I hope that for many years to come it will be mine to be with you on days of Icelandic celebrations. It is my wish to join in your happiness in this hallowed place, which is considered the capital of the Icelandic people in North America. You have made the name Gimli famous on this continent. Gimli was the home of the gods of the North and the word has been borrowed from the Icelandic

language, and now it is heard every day, unaltered, in the broadcasts of the weather bureau.

In conclusion I pray to God of Our Land, who, sixteen years ago, led my nation for a second time to freedom and independence, to lead you to victory in every good endeavor in your land of adoption, in the land of Leif the Lucky, who, nine hundred and sixty years ago, was one of my most renowned sons—the first white man to land his ship on the shores of this vast continent.

May Iceland's urge to progress flourish;  
Peace and freedom bless all nations.

## Dr. Björn Sigurbjörnsson

on Staff of University of Iceland



Dr. Björn Sigurbjörnsson

It was welcome news to hear that Björn Sigurbjörnsson had been appointed to the Department of Agriculture in the University of Iceland. Many will recall that he spent five

years in undergraduate work in the University of Manitoba. In 1956 he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, winning the University Gold Medal in that Department. At the same time he was awarded a scholarship from the Canadian Research Council for further studies in his chosen branch in Agriculture.

From Manitoba Björn Sigurbjörnsson went to Cornell University in Ithaca, N. Y., where he obtained a Master's degree and then the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He specialized in plant genetics and the improvement of strains of grasses. His thesis for the Doctor's degree was on the Icelandic "Melgresi", lyme grass—one of the tussock grasses. Melgras grows on the gravel heaths of Iceland and Björn no doubt had in mind the grasses of the uplands when he decided to specialize in plant genetics and the improvement of strains of grasses in Iceland.

The many friends of Björn and his wife, Helga, who was on the staff of the University Library, in the Icelandic department, extend best wishes to them both.

# A TOAST TO CANADA

An address delivered by GUNNAR O. EGGERTSON, at the Icelandic-day Celebration held in Gimli, Man., on August 1, 1960.

We are all proud to be Canadian,  
proud of our land.

Its open skies, its scarlet sunsets with  
clouds flecked with gold,

Its mountains corrugating its surface,  
and feeding us with their rugged  
beauty,

Its oceans sparkling on a summer's  
evening or drowning all other sound  
with its crashing surf,

Its northland, silent, mysterious, dotted  
with innumerable lakes,

Its prairies, now green with the growth  
to feed millions.

We have a wondrous land,

Our Canada is a good land,

One that does not yield her treasure  
lightly,

One that wisely makes us labour to  
extract her trove.

Weather that keeps us alert and keen,  
that braces and stimulates and puts  
temper in our soul,

A land of which we can be proud,

And a people of whom we can be  
proud.

For despite the problems of great  
distances, of muskeg and rock, lake and  
mountains, despite the clash of the  
French-speaking and English-speaking  
cultures, despite the pull of an easier  
life in the United States of America—  
we have created a nation.

We owe much to those who have  
gone before, those who have kept alive  
the light of learning, who have kindled

the fire of liberty, those pioneers who  
have prepared a way in the wilderness.

All of us here feel a deep love for  
our country. Do we care enough for  
Canada? Are we working to make Can-  
ada a better country in which to live,  
are we helping our people? Are we  
helping the world, or are we lost in  
complacency?

Are we as Canadians doing our part  
to fulfill the promise of our pioneers?  
Are we, as Canadians of Icelandic  
descent, doing our part to make Can-  
ada a better place in which to live, a  
more effective force for good in the  
councils of the world and for the  
people of the world?

There is a fallacy which is holding  
us back. This is that Canadians should  
not try to develop their identity as a  
country either economically or cultural-  
ly because we must hold ourselves for  
the greater goal of internationalism.  
This attitude is wrong. We are deceiv-  
ing ourselves and being unfaithful to  
our children to continue to think, as  
many do, that there is something bad,  
something immoral, in trying to  
develop our country for the benefit of  
Canadians. We need not fear the vari-  
ety of nationalism which was shown at  
its worst in Nazi Germany. The kind  
of nationalism which we as Canadians  
should try to develop is a feeling of  
identity with and comradeship for the  
peoples of our country. There are no  
revolutions to fight, no ruling class  
to overthrow, we are all rulers and  
determine freely and openly who shall  
govern.

In to-day's world, only a united state can pull together to help others and be an influence in the world. Unless Canada can exist as a strong nation, strong in purpose, in moral fibre and able to supply the economic needs of its own people as well as that of others, Canada will count for little in the councils of the world.

It is being dishonest to our own seventeen million people to not make our own decisions but to be tied to the foreign policy of other nations. We can best help internationalism and help other countries by setting our own house in order.

We count for nothing as a country if we merely echo the sentiments of the United States of America or the United Kingdom. The Canadian people, and the future generations of Canadians, have a right to be represented; to exert a force in world affairs determined by Canadians.

To do otherwise is to deny the maturity of our people. It is to say that we are unfit to make our own decisions. To fail to be strong and united means that we surrender to others the right to decide. To deny Canadian nationalism is to surrender to forces beyond our control and beyond our understanding the fate of our country.

Canada's history has been a struggle to escape from forces economic, political and cultural which sought to exercise too strong a force on her affairs. To-day our main threat to survival as a truly independent country lies in our economic and cultural dependence on the United States of America. Great segments of our industry and commerce are controlled from the United States. Two thirds of our industry and close to one hundred per cent of our oil and natural gas companies are owned or controlled from the United States.

This is not good for any country. This is not good for Canada. Since we are only part of their operations, the main concern of the owners will be with their home market and with their home workers. The nature of American investment in this country since 1945 has been largely devoted to exporting power and extracting and removing mineral wealth to the United States. We have become their treasure chest. We are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

In a recent speech, Mr. W. F. Holding, President of General Steel Wares of Canada, stated that one man in Ungava, using modern equipment, could dig forty tons of iron ore out of the ground in one day. This quantity of ore would provide a day's work for one hundred men in a steel mill and the result in steel would provide a day's work for two thousand men in factories turning the steel into finished goods. He points out that this general pattern holds good for other industries such as aluminum and lumber.

We have the one man in Ungava, Kitimat and in Flin Flon. Do we have the one hundred men working in our steel mills and the two thousand Canadians working in our factories processing this raw material?

Must we remain hewers of wood and drawers of water? Canada is blessed by nature with resources, mineral wealth and cheap fuel. Are we living up to our obligation to our children and our children's children by shipping these raw materials and power resources out of our country?

Are we actually benefitting our country or are we not giving away incalculable future benefits to our people for a few dollars to-day for more cigarettes and whiskey?

There are several dangers in exporting raw materials and power sources.

If you move the materials and power to the United States where the markets and labour sources are already present then there is little likelihood that American industrialists would construct plants in Canada to process our raw materials. The United States is rapidly exhausting their sources of cheap raw materials and cheap power. If we were not shipping our raw material and power to them they would set up plants in Canada, and process them there. A further danger is that if industry is set up in the United States based on our cheap materials and power, we may find it difficult, if not impossible, politically, to stop this flow southward. This has happened in the past.

The danger here is that we are exporting jobs and not ore. Since 1945 we have been paying for the excess of imports over exports by selling our ownership and control over our natural resources.

Only by keeping control of our industry and our resources in Canada can we develop a solid base for prosperity and provide strength through which Canada will be able to lend aid to other nations. Economic independence would give us political flexibility to express the unique desires of the Canadian people.

An economic solution to this problem would be the orderly development of our natural resources to serve Canada first, by a gradually imposed tax on the export of raw materials and power. This tax would lessen in proportion as the material had been processed or manufactured in Canada. This would mean that as new plants were required abroad it would be cheaper to escape the tax and build here in Canada. By imposing the gradual tax it would give time for adjustment. This would make economic laws work for our advantage. The result

would be more jobs, more people and prosperity. A possible price would be the tightening of our belts for a few years, but think of the advantages.

There is also a danger to our culture by our dependence on the United States of America. We cannot compete, due to our small market, with American publications and movies and to a lesser extent in television and radio, with the result that our image of the world and even of ourselves is viewed through American eyes. We are looking at the world through their tinted glasses. We have different attitudes which are worth-while keeping alive. We have a more wholesome respect for the law. We do not place so much emphasis on show and glitter. We do not have the witch-hunting which takes place in the United States, as witness the McCarthy hearings.

To be a truly independent people we must have the opportunity to keep our attitudes alive and develop them. This is only possible through more Canadian-produced magazines, through Canadian attitudes and through Canadian reporting on world affairs. There is a need for more emphasis on Canadian problems, on the understanding of our French-Canadian fellow citizens, and our other national problems, instead of a pre-occupation with what is going on to our south. We need knowledge of our country's problems, its passions and its prejudices. Anything we as a people can do to increase our understanding of ourselves is worth-while.

The solution to this cultural dependence would be some form of tax relief for Canadian-produced publications either as a subsidy or by a tariff on the classes of publications made abroad which are exerting too great an influence on our cultural life.

These measures directed against the economic and cultural dangers would

mean more strength in Canada both economically and as a united nation, but this would only be a means to an end. We must develop our lands and our people. We are not selling prosperity but a fighting faith. We can do more for the world and for our people as a truly independent nation. A full belly is not the measure of a man.

In the battle for men's minds that is going on in the world to-day we are in the front line. We are not selling to the world our economic system. We are not trying to sell to the billions with empty stomachs our Cadillacs and fancy-packaged goodies. We must proclaim and live a fighting faith. If our past means anything to us, we should only seek strength as a nation so as to be able to stand forcibly for the principles on which all democratic nations are founded.

The Western world is based on the principle of supremacy of the individual; that man is made in the image of God and that each man's life is precious. The state exists for man and not he for the state. These principles are what we should keep as touchstones in our life.

We Canadians of Icelandic descent can contribute much to this land of ours. There are traditions which have been handed down from our forefathers which need re-affirming. Firstly there is the great love of freedom. Iceland has the oldest parliament in the world. Icelanders have always been willing to stand up for what they consider right no matter what the odds, as witness the current fishing dispute with Great Britain.

Secondly, there is the tradition of an inquiring mind, the tradition of in-

quiry into all things, and of frank discussion and respect for the right to speak. The Icelandic tradition of searching for first principles and of examining and discussing trends and events in our day and time are vitally needed to-day.

Thirdly, there is the Icelandic respect for learning. A poet is a great man in Iceland. We have the tradition of home education on the farms, and the high literacy of the Icelandic nation. And lastly, the Icelanders value a man for what he is and not for what he has. These traditions are needed to-day. By keeping these traditions alive we will come to greater knowledge and understanding of our people and our land.

Through knowledge and understanding will come personal satisfaction, and for the nation a true measure of greatness. Should we strive for less?

In the Icelandic tradition we should cast aside an attitude of materialism and be prepared to strike a blow for freedom. With our background, of which we can always be proud, we can contribute to the fabric of the Canadian nation and stand for personal freedoms, free and frank discussions, respect for and interest in learning, and the valuing of man for what he is as opposed to valuing all things in terms of material wealth. Each in our own way let us be true to our forefathers to make this Canada of ours a better place, remembering always the sacrifices of those in many lands that have made it possible for us to be here in this place and give a toast to our own, our native land, Canada.



## The Icelandic Celebration

The sun shone brightly on the seventy-first Icelandic Celebration, held at Gimli, August 1. There was a good attendance, including a surprising number of young people. The program was good, and it was reasonably brief, slightly under two hours.

The Fjallkona was Mrs. Doris Johnson, wife of the Minister of Health and Welfare in the Manitoba government. Her attendants were Miss Lorna Medd, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Dallas Medd, and Miss Janis Johnson, daughter of the Honorable and Mrs. George Johnson. The Fjallkona, in her address of welcome, expressed her warm affection for the Icelandic pioneers and their descendants in America, and her pride in their achievements.

The speakers were Reverend Jon Bjarman, pastor of the Lundar Lutheran Church, and Gunnar Eggertson, a Winnipeg lawyer and president-elect of the Icelandic Canadian Club. Both speakers belong to the younger generation, and both spoke well. Reverend Bjarman, in his toast to Iceland, spoke of the austere beauty and challenge of the country and the achievements of its people. Mr. Eggertson, in his toast to Canada, spoke of the beauty and promise of Canada, and stressed the need for Canada to process more of her natural resources at home and thereby promote the greater growth of the nation.

Honorable Duff Roblin, Premier of Manitoba, brought greetings from the Province. In a brief address of a high oratorical standard, he paid tribute to the people of Icelandic descent in the Province, in a variety of fields. Greetings from the Prime Minister, Right Honorable John G. Diefenbaker,

were brought by Eric Stefanson, M.P., and the chairman read a message from the leader of the opposition, Honorable L. B. Pearson. A message was conveyed from the government of Iceland by the Icelandic Consul, Grettir L. Johannson. Greetings were brought by Mayor Barney Egilson of Gimli and by Reverend P. M. Petursson, Vice-President of the National League. Reverend Bragi Fridriksson, former pastor in the Manitoba Inter-Lake district, now resident in Iceland, spoke briefly. An original poem, "Ode to Iceland", by P. S. Palsson, of Gimli, maintained the poetic tradition of the Celebration.

Two soloists featured on the musical program were Reg Frederickson and Patricia Johnson, both of Winnipeg. Mr. Frederickson sang both Icelandic and English numbers, including "Draumalandid" and Miss Patricia featured the Icelandic folksong "Olafur reid med bjorgum fram", which was her award-winning selection at the Winnipeg Music Festival last spring. The accompanists were Mrs. Bjorg Isfeld and Mrs. Elma Gislason. A children's choir under the direction of Mrs. Anna Stevens and Mrs. Gudrun Stevens, and accompanied by Miss Carolyn Martin, sang Icelandic folksongs. The band from the Gimli R.C.A.F. station was welcomed back again.

Following the program, the Fjallkona laid a wreath on the stone cairn which commemorates the arrival of the pioneers of 1875. This memorial was designed by Mrs. Johnson's father, the late Dr. A. Blondal.

A parade of floats in the morning, and a variety of sports formed a part of the program of the day. In the evening a sing-song in English and Iceland-

ic was conducted by Reverend Eric Sigmar, with Mrs. Barbara Honey the accompanist, and pictures of Iceland were shown. This was followed by a dance in the pavilion in the park.

The chairman of the day was Helgi Johnson, of Winnipeg.

The gratifying number of young people in attendance has been men-

tioned. Soon, however, the program committee will have to consider the advisability of reducing still more the Icelandic language content of the program, especially in some of the greetings, to maintain the prestige and popularity of "the largest gathering among the Icelandic people in America". —W. Kristjanson

## Manitoba Mosaic Week



From left to right Shirley Bjarnason, Phyllis Johnson, Johanne Stefanson and Caroline Dyer

In Manitoba there are people of very many nationalities. Representatives from these arranged to put on a programme on Rainbow Stage in Winnipeg last June. Participants performed by singing and dancing, many wearing national costumes.

Mrs. H. F. Danielson was asked to look after the Icelandic part in this programme. She arranged that the choir of the First Lutheran Church under the direction of Mrs. Bjorg Isfeld should sing there for two evenings. Several of the choir members wore the Icelandic costume, among them the young ladies appearing in the above photograph.

## *The Famine of the Mist* *A People Survives Nature's Fury*

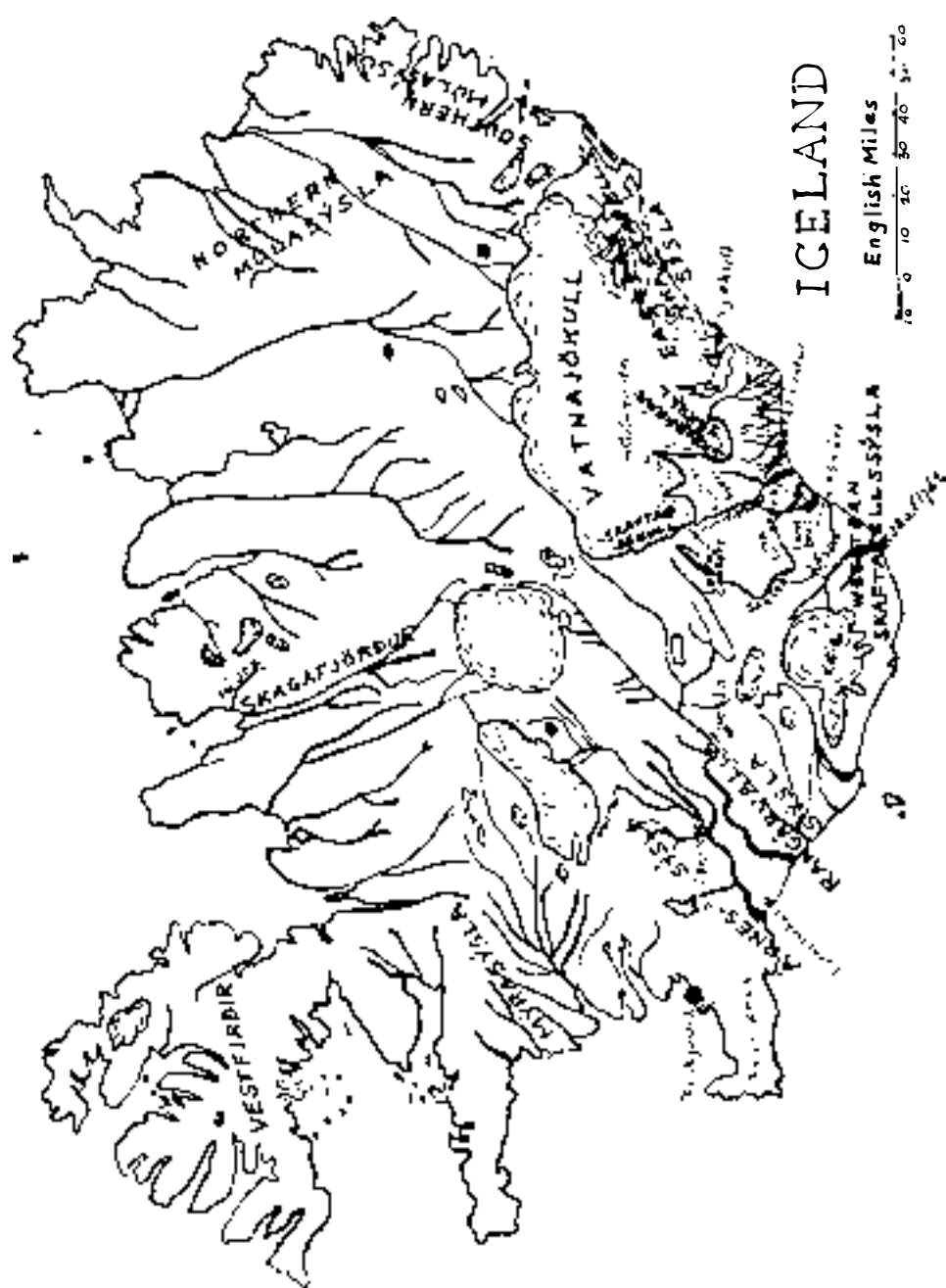
by VILHJÁLMUR BJARNAR

Although its name is something of a misnomer, Iceland has in many respects been an inhospitable country to its inhabitants. Its northerly latitude gives it a cool climate, which nevertheless is considerably moderated by the presence of the Gulf Stream. With an average temperature in July of about 50–52 degrees Fahrenheit, only the hardiest crops can thrive. On the other hand, the winters are much milder as a rule than one would expect of a country so far north, the average January temperature being in the neighborhood of thirty degrees. Although there are extensive fertile grasslands in various areas, the country for the greater part is hard, barren, and mountainous; and about eighty per cent of its total area of approximately 39,700 square miles is uninhabitable. For example, glaciers and lava fields cover about 11.5 and 13 per cent of the surface, respectively. There is also a large number of volcanoes scattered over the interior, over thirty of which have erupted within historical times, some of them repeatedly so that about 130 eruptions are now on record—the most recent one being that of Mount Hekla in 1947-48.

Such are some of the less attractive features of the environment in which the Icelandic nation has lived for over a thousand years. Until fairly recent times, some basic weaknesses in the economy of the country made the nation particularly susceptible to any worsening of environmental conditions.

The major weakness was the uniformity of the economy (true to a certain extent even today); that is, it was almost exclusively a livestock raising economy, with a little fishing on the side. The livestock—sheep being the most important both for clothing and for food—in turn depend entirely on grass crops and grazing, even winter grazing to a certain extent. Obviously, when these failed, as often they did during cold seasons — frequently brought on by polar ice drift, flocks and herds would be depleted; and as a result the ghost of famine stared the people in the face. But in addition to the uniformity of the economy, deterioration of good lands from erosion and other causes, poor communications internally as well as externally, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the Danish trade monopoly with its exploitation of the people—no doubt all played a part in weakening the nation's resistance to the onslaught of adverse conditions.

Taking the natural environment and the above-mentioned weaknesses of the economic organization of the country into consideration, it is not surprising that the struggles of the people with their environment has in past centuries been a singularly severe one. According to Bishop Hannes Finnsson of Skálholt diocese (b. 1739), a noted scholar, in its 919 years' history up to the writing of his treatise as of 1793 "Um mannfækkun af hallærum á Íslandi", (On the Decrease of Population in Iceland



as a Result of Years of Distress<sup>1</sup>, Iceland had been visited with ninety hard years. Half of them, however, had caused no decrease in the population, but about twice in each century there were severe losses of human life from famine.

One of the most disastrous centuries in the history of Iceland, judged in terms of human lives lost, was without a doubt the eighteenth century, when according to accurate estimates, there was approximately a 6.4 per cent reduction in the population. In his work *Island i det 8de Aarhundrede* (Iceland in the Eighteenth Century) Chief Justice Magnús Stephensen, Bishop Finns-son's contemporary, writes the following "obituary" of the century<sup>2</sup>:

During this century Iceland experienced forty-three years of distress due to cold winters, ice-floes, failures of fisheries, shipwrecks, inundations, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, epidemics and contagious diseases among men and animals, which often came separately, but often in connection with and as a result of one another.

Perhaps Mr. Stephensen's standard as to what constitutes a "year of distress" was less rigid than that of Bishop Finns-son, but a partial list of the blows suffered by the Icelandic nation during the eighteenth century presents a dismal picture indeed.

The century made its debut with polar ice drift and failure of the hay crop as well as of fishing in 1701, resulting in a famine that lasted into the following year. In 1701 a smallpox epidemic took a toll of about 18,000 lives and thus brought the population to the lowest known point—or about 24,000—since the end of the original immigration period.<sup>3</sup> The 1727–28 eruption of Öræfajökull destroyed

many farms and depleted flocks and herds. Serious epidemics raged in the years 1740, 1742, 1747, 1762, 1766-68, and 1773. The Katla eruption of 1755 caused 50 farms to be destroyed, and the 1766 eruption of Hekla, the most notorious of Iceland's volcanoes, brought about much damage to lands and killed livestock in large numbers. A period of severe climatic conditions, 1751-57, often attended by polar ice drift, frost, and snow even in summer months, reduced the population by some 6,000 souls. A sheep epidemic, which raged from 1761 until about 1780 and affected large areas of the country, had reduced the flocks by approximately 60 per cent as of 1770. In 1772 a gradual wholesale slaughter of all sheep in the affected areas and their replacement by sheep from unaffected areas was instituted. On top of all this came the Lakagígur (Laka Craters) eruption of 1783-84 with all its attendant hardships, without doubt the heaviest blow ever dealt to Icelandic farming and the most destructive disaster other than pestilence ever to hit the nation.

Seldom, if ever, had the people of Iceland been worse prepared to meet disaster than in 1783. The sheep epidemic had created an agricultural depression, with lack of food and clothing in large areas. In addition, after a tolerably favorable interlude from 1758 to 1777 the climate again began to enter a cold cycle, with polar ice frequently drifting to the shores and causing failure of hay crops and attendant hardships to animals and humans. By 1780-81 famine and disease had taken a toll of almost a thousand human lives. The winter of 1782-83 was extremely unfavorable everywhere, and the spring even more so except in the Southland. Frost damage and cold weather completely ruined the hay

crop in the north and east so that even without the eruption and its consequences that part of the country would surely have been headed for a famine.

With this background of pestilence and natural calamities in mind, let us now turn to a discussion of the volcanic activity of 1783-84 and its aftermath, which constitute the primary purpose of this paper. Never in the history of Iceland has there been greater volcanic activity than in the year 1783. Early in the spring there occurred off the coast of Reykjanes (southwest Iceland) a brief eruption which gave birth to an island only to have it sink into a watery grave after a short life. Soon thereafter people noticed volcanic activity in the mountains of the east, most likely in the area of Grímsvötn in Vatnajökull (Glacier of Lakes), but little was known of this activity until in September the following year when there occurred a glacial burst (jökulhlaup) from Skeiðarárjökull. There are other indications, although not capable of proof, that a submarine volcano in the Arctic to the north and west of Iceland may have erupted in 1783, for it is reported that ash dust with darkness and stench prevailed in Vestfirðir (Westfjords) that summer, especially when the wind blew from the north and west. Finally, there was the eruption already mentioned of the Laka-gígar—a row of craters some twenty miles long located north of the Síða district, near the rim of Skaftárjökull.

Following a week of earth tremors in Western Skaftafellssýsla, in southeast Iceland, a great cloud of dust and smoke was seen rising in the north on June 8, 1783. Soon the river Skaftá began to dry up until its bed was empty except for water from tributaries that flow into it in the inhabited areas. On June 12 a great lava stream poured out of the Skaftá chasm into the Síða

district. On June 29 a new fiery flood came out of the chasm, splitting into three forks—the westernmost flowing down into Kúðaflljót and stopping south of the farm, Ásar, the central one heading toward Landbrot and reaching as far south as Steinsmýri, and the third making its way east along the Síða mountains and finally coming to a halt near Kirkjubæjarklaustur on July 20. Ten days later a great lava flood came down the course of the river Hverfisfljót, to the east of the Síða district, so the people feared that the district was about to be surrounded by the lava. Fortunately, however, this did not happen.

The craters, about one hundred in number, of which as many as twenty were observed to be simultaneously active—continually spewing up lava with little interruption—until the end of October, and even, with abated force, until February. This lava flow is considered by geologists to have been the greatest ever to come from a single eruption anywhere within recorded history, amounting to an estimated 530 billion cubic feet in volume and covering an area of about 174 square miles.<sup>4</sup> The lava reached tremendous thickness in some places. Because of their thickness the lava fields retained high temperature under the crust for a long time. Across these fiery fields, then, the displaced glacial rivers mentioned above were tossed about for months without finding steady courses, adding much foul steam to the smoke and mist coming from the eruption as they “fried” in the heat.

In addition to the tremendous volume of lava vomited by the craters, the eruption brought up an estimated 100 billion cubic feet of ashes and pumice. Nevertheless the damage caused by the ashes as such was relatively slight compared with the devastation

wrought by some of the greater eruptions of Mount Hekla, as for instance the eruptions of 1633 and 1766. Although ashes fell now and then in other districts near the volcanic area, the only district to suffer any serious damage of some duration was Fljóts hverfi, which in 1784 was visited with additional ashes from the eruption in Vatnajökull. In the highlands north of Síða, however, there was a heavier fall of ashes, which increased in thickness as one approached the points of origin. As for the rest of the country, only traces of dust and ashes were scattered down from the mist which hovered over the volcanic area and over most of the island during the entire summer.

The same type of mist was also seen in the air over a large portion of the Northern Hemisphere, or from Siberia to North America, and even as far south as South America. Some ashes are reported to have fallen in the Faroe Islands, Norway, and Scotland, where cornfields are said to have been damaged in Caithness; and traces of ashes were reported in Denmark and Holland. In Iceland, especially near the volcanic area, where the mist and the smoke were heaviest, the sun and the moon, whenever visible, were colored a bloody red, thus creating a weird color effect on the landscape. That the mist, in the eyes of the people of Iceland, was the outstanding phenomenon connected with the eruption is seen by the fact that they named the bad season and famine following it “Móðuharðindi”, or the “Famine of the Mist”.

Mixed in with the mist and ashes were sulphur, saltpeter, and various other harmful substances which were carried up with the force of the eruption and dispersed about in the air and then brought down to earth again with

rain or snow. (The weather turned colder after the eruption began.) The effects of these poisonous substances were devastating, and naturally most so in the districts near the eruption, where many small birds and trout as well as the whole mice population were killed outright and where the stench of the poison-laden precipitation on occasion was so pungent that persons with respiratory ailments could hardly breathe and were near fainting.

But large, even distant, areas of the country were also affected. Wherever the poisonous substances fell on the earth, plants withered and in time died. In July, for example, birch leaves were black and shriveled up as if scorched. In some places woods were completely destroyed and never revived. The Iceland moss (lichen Islandicus), an important dietary supplement, also died out for the most part and failed for the next three years over most of the country. Pastures were naturally badly affected too, both from the volcanic substances and from the effects of the cold, so that the livestock wandered about during the summer hungry and restless, some of it falling ill. The hay crop, of course, was very poor both as to quantity and quality. For that reason, in the fall most farmers had to slaughter one third and some even half of their cattle.

With this account the sad story of the blow dealt to the land and its inhabitants by the great disaster has, however, just begun. Consider first the land itself. In addition to the temporary damage caused by the poisonous substances, more serious losses occurred. The lava flow claimed much good land, which became a total loss. Permanent damage was also done by the encroaching of rampaging rivers whose courses had been diverted by the lava flow. Some further damage

was caused by ashes as well as by drifting sand from dried up river beds. All in all, twenty-nine farms were ruined to a greater or lesser extent, but fortunately most of them could be reclaimed—some of them soon, others however only after a considerable length of time.

Looking next at the loss sustained by the country's livestock industry, one is appalled at its magnitude. Its direct causes were, first, hunger resulting from the failure of the hay crop and of the summer and winter grazing and, second, disease of malnutrition and of poisoning—e.g., fluoric poisoning—caused by the harmful substances mixed in the diet. The loss was by far the heaviest the first winter following the eruption, varying according to areas. The Skaftafellssýslas and Múlasýslas, which had been unaffected by the sheep epidemic, suffered the greatest loss of sheep, or about 94 per cent; Skagafjörður lost the greatest number of cattle and Mýrasýsla the greatest number of horses, or approximately 89 and 88 per cent, respectively. As for the entire country, of cattle 11,461 (ca. 53%), of sheep 190,488 (ca. 82%), and of horses 28,013 (ca. 77%) were lost during the first winter.<sup>5</sup> The loss sustained the following winter amounted to considerably less than that of 1783-84 since there was much less from which to take, but it was felt all the more sorely.

Now for the most serious consequences of these years of distress, from the purely human point of view—the famine and the loss of human life. With flocks and herds seriously depleted, the mainstay of the nation's diet meat and milk, was in very short supply. Add to this the fact that the supplementary industry, fishing, failed utterly throughout the summer of 1783 and until May 1784, and again in the fall of the same year, it is easy to see

that the people were hard pressed. Their suffering from starvation and various attendant diseases was beyond description.

The Northland was first to be seriously hit by the famine, as was to be expected in view of the situation prevailing there already before the eruption. The winter of 1783-84 was extremely severe, with frost and polar ice drift. A good indication of the seriousness of the situation is the fact that 315 farms were deserted as the people died in large numbers or broke up their households because of want and resorted to vagrancy or begging. Conditions in the south were less severe at this time, although there was much distress there also, especially in the Western Skaftafellssýsla, where a large number of people broke up their households and took to vagrancy and where many also met with sudden death.

The summer of 1784 was a most unfavorable one in many respects. For one thing, grass growth was scanty everywhere except in Western Skaftafellssýsla, where by now the volcanic substances were probably acting as a fertilizer;<sup>6</sup> and because of the sickness and emaciation of the people the amount of hay cropped in many places was even more meager than it might have been. In addition, in Árnessýsla and Rangárvallasýsla, conditions were further aggravated by devastating earthquakes, which began in August and continued—first many tremors a day, later two or three per week—until after Christmas. The two initial shocks, which occurred on August 14 and 16, were the most destructive, damaging to a greater or lesser extent 372 farmsteads, of which sixty-nine were levelled to the ground. Food supplies were spoiled and household effects damaged, and the huts that were hastily erected from the ruins were, obviously, rather in-

adequate for human habitation. To make matters worse, the merchant boat that was to have brought grain supplies for these districts to the port of Eyrarbakki was wrecked on the southeast coast with total loss of its cargo. Food could not be transported to the area from more distant trading stations on account of the shortage of horses.

Disastrous as the situation had been the previous winter, the winter of 1784-85 proved even more so in terms of human lives lost, and this time the Southland was hardest hit. Now, to the hunger and disease resulting from malnutrition was added a destructive epidemic. The death rate shot upward. Thus, in an average parish, where the usual yearly death rate was about twenty, now more than 200 persons died. Roughly speaking, the number of deaths in excess of births for the year 1785 came to about 5050, about two-thirds of which belonged to the Skálholt diocese (which included the west, south and east quarters of the country) and the remaining third in the Hólar diocese (Northland), whereas the figure for 1784 had come to about 4190 and been fairly evenly divided between the two dioceses.

The generally accepted estimate of the decrease in the population of Iceland during these two disastrous years is 9238. In the four hardest hit parishes in Western Skaftafellssýsla, the loss for two years was no less than 37 per cent. Bishop Finnsson estimated that for the period since 1779, when conditions had begun to worsen seriously in Iceland, up to 1785, the country experienced a reduction in population by about 10,354, or approximately by one-fifth. Adding to that the 1500 persons killed by the smallpox epidemic of 1786, which came as a fitting finale to the calamities of the eighteenth century, he estimates that about one fourth

of the population of Iceland died from hunger and diseases during the period.

Thus ended one of the most disastrous periods in the history of the people of Iceland. The famine itself had passed over by the arrival of the summer of 1785 when weather conditions again took a turn for the better. At that time the nation was naturally half-paralyzed from the stunning blow which had been dealt to it. Most of the people were sick or destitute, or both, but they recovered amazingly fast.

Various factors, in addition to the more favorable climatic conditions which prevailed during most of the remainder of the century, contributed to the recovery. Contributions of funds from Denmark proved of some benefit, although they did little to lessen the people's distress—in part because the greater proportion of them did not arrive until after the famine had passed over. Of greater importance were various measures taken in 1784 by the governor of Iceland and by the commission for the Iceland trade monopoly for increased imports of food stuffs, for the transportation of goods between ports in the country, and for the limitation of exports of food stuffs from the country. That these measures did not suffice to prevent the serious loss sustained during the following winter, however, we have already seen. But perhaps the most important man-made factor in the recovery was the abolition of the trade monopoly, rendering trade with Iceland free to all subjects of the Danish realm as of January 1, 1787, which resulted in increased trade and improved trading conditions during the years immediately following.

An indication of the amazingly rapid recovery of the nation's economy is that by the turn of the century the number of livestock again was equal

to what it had been before the failure. As for the human population, it also increased fast, so that by 1801 it had risen to 47,240 from its 1787 low of approximately 38,667. But the 50,000 mark was not passed again until after 1820.

Thus, as always before, when reasonably tolerable conditions returned after some calamity, the people of Iceland surged ahead—a shining testimony to the wonderful resilience of human beings. Perhaps the Icelandic nation, which ever since its beginnings had been subject to the most severe process

of natural selection, possessed this resilience in an extra rich measure. One wonders. It would be no exaggeration to say that in the period discussed all of Iceland's natural enemies—fire, ice, famine, and pestilence—joined forces against the nation in one devastating blow after another. It cannot be gainsaid that the great eruption of 1783-84 and its aftermath, the "Famine of the Mist", had many of the characteristics of a catastrophe which might easily have led to the utter annihilation of a small nation.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Rit þess konunglega íslenska lærdómslistafélags, 14 (1793): 30-226 (Kaupmannahöfn, 1796).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Knut Gjerset, *History of Iceland* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> On the basis of the number of tax-paying farmers in 1095, or 165 years after the immigration period ended, the population is estimated to have been in that year in the neighborhood of 77,000. Cf. Sigurður Þórarinsson,

*The Thousand Year Struggle against Ice and Fire* (Reykjavik: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs, 1956), p. 26. This, he states, would suffice to cover the whole of England with a lava layer nearly four inches thickness.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 26: 15 km<sup>3</sup> and 450 km<sup>2</sup>, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> These percentages are somewhat unreliable since they are based on more or less loose estimates of the number of stock in existence in 1783. The corresponding figures cited by Þórarinsson (*ibid.*, p. 22-23) are (in the same order): 50%, 77%, 76%.

## Pheasant Hunt

Brown leaves crackle underfoot.  
The thin straight path is shingled  
With dead summer.  
The path turns downward,  
And the crackle slides  
Into the suck and squelch  
Of mud in a farmer's ditch.  
A hound snuffles and shuffles  
Through long dry grass.  
A pheasant rises and strong wings  
Beat the air.  
A hunter's gun rises,  
And the autumn air falls  
Into brittle fragments around our ears.  
With a sad thud  
Bright feathers fall to earth.

—Mary-Anne Valgardson

## The Creature and The Coward

by EILEEN ODDSON

A fear of crawling creatures is something one can do without in Mexico.

My hotel room in Mexico City was probably as modern as it could possibly be, and it positively shone with cleanliness. You could certainly not envision it as the home of tarantulas, scorpions or the like. Secure in this supposition, I prepared for my first night's sleep south of the border.

As I pattered, in barefeet, back and forth between the bedroom and bath, making my nightly toilet, I chuckled to myself at all those ridiculous stories I had heard of poisonous bugs who inhabited this part of the world. I turned out the bathroom light, a serious mistake I later discovered, and made for the bed and serene sleep.

Out of the corner of my eye, I glimpsed something else sauntering in the same direction! It was broad, brown and big!

When faced with danger I make no bones about being a coward. I leaped for the bed. It was no doubt the world's record for the standing broad-jump but as my only witness was a Latin bug, I can prove nothing. Cowering over the edge of my bed, I scrutinized my enemy and planned my counterattack.

He, it must have been male judging by the size, had stopped dead in his tracks in the middle of the rug. It raced through my mind that he was plotting his next move and probably had six

enormously long legs hidden under his bloated shell. There was only one thing to do. Get help.

This was no easy matter. The telephone was naturally placed, in the most efficient Mexican manner, as far from the bed as possible. It tantalized me from its desk by the door. Even in my wild state, I knew there was not much use in screaming. A charming waterfall catapulted from a terrace outside the door to the dining room below, and my voice would be lost in the tumult. I decided to bring back the broad-jump.

I swung the bed-chair into position half way to the desk. The creature scurried under it and, I was sure, laughed maniacally at my pitiful effort to escape. But, fear drove me on and I leaped like a gazelle, albeit a quivering one, from bed to chair to desk, all in a split second. Thank goodness "help" sounds the same in any language. The delightful telephone informed the Senorita that help was on the way.

Reprieve came in the person of a sturdy Indian lad who promptly squashed my enemy between thumb and forefinger. If he felt inclined to laugh at the white-faced, barefoot Americano shaking on the desk, he had too much Latin courtesy to do so.

If there is a moral to this story, it could be "love all creatures big and small and always wear your slippers."





The picture above shows **MISS ICELAND—Sigrídur (Sirry) Geirsdóttir** with the trophy she won for being voted Miss Photogenic by the press photographers covering the Beauty Congress.

## *Miss Iceland—Sigrídur Geirsdóttir*

Iceland may not have a sputnik in orbit but she has something much more beautiful—**Sigrídur Geirsdóttir**, who sent the name of her country around the globe into at least 52 countries by placing third in the International Beauty Congress just ended in Long Beach, California.

Of the 52 representatives from 52 countries, (including one from Canada and one from the United States), and spanning five continents, the international panel of nine judges selected a stately brunette from South America, Miss Columbia, as the most fair and deserving of the title of Miss International Beauty 1961. Dusky, willowy, black-eyed Miss India was first runner-up, and **Miss Iceland** second runner-up.

Sigrídur, 22, (or Sirry as she prefers to be called) is the daughter of a Reykjavík business man and has two younger sisters at home. She is the epitome of Nordic beauty with her long naturally blonde hair, which has never been cut, very blue eyes and flawless fair complexion. She is five feet, four and one-half inches tall and weighs just over 100 well-distributed pounds.

Press photographers were not long in discovering the physical assets of Miss Iceland and voted her "**Miss Photogenic**", the most photogenic contestant in the contest.

Nor are Sirry's assets all physical. She has brains too as evidenced by the fact that she is in her last year as a Language and Philosophy student at the University of Iceland. In addition to Icelandic, she speaks Swedish, English, German, French and Danish.

Singing, dancing and sunbathing are Sirry's favorite hobbies. Actually she has sung professionally in Reykjavík and around Iceland for some time while attending University, and studied dramatics with a private tutor for about two years. To those who were skeptical about sunbathing in Iceland, Sirry had only to point to her own golden tan but admitted that some of it had been obtained in Istanbul, Turkey, where she vacationed before coming to America.

"Of course I want to get married", says Sirry, "but not yet. There are some things I want to do first." There is a special beau at home in Reykjavík who is studying medicine while Sirry discovers new fields.

And now that the Beauty Congress has opened so many doors for her, what are the plans of this lovely "bundle of dynamite", as her official hostess, Mrs. Sumi Swanson, calls her.

"The taste I have had of the entertainment world, makes me want more", she says.

It looks as if lovely Sirry will get her wish. Before the pageant was even over, offers were coming in from many sides including one from Columbia Studios to give her a contract for seven years without even a screen test. However, no quick decisions were made and on August 22, she signed a contract with Music Corporation of America, thus putting her future in the show business world in the hands of one of the largest theatrical agents in Hollywood.

So it seems Iceland has a star in orbit that may well bear watching.

—Rhuna Emery

## A Jew to Jews and Greek to Greeks

by ROBERT JACK

While sitting in a quiet place of an affluent mens' club in the Pall Mall, London, my eyes wandered for a moment to a couple of richly clad gentlemen enjoying their tea close by. One of the two lifted his eyes from his cup and looked in my direction. Our eyes met. Almost immediately we knew that we had seen each other before. I turned to my companion, the present Lord Tweedsmuir, and son of a former Governor General of Canada, and to make sure, I asked him if I were right in saying that the gentleman at the next table in the dark-grey suit had been, during the last World War, a high ranking officer in the British Air Force. Inconspicuously the Lord glanced towards the man I had referred to and then after a sip of his tea he told me that he had been the aide to Lord Tedder the War Chief of the Air Force. I smiled and recalled the following story.

It was during the war, to be exact, during the summer of 1941, that on a street near the heart of Reykjavik, Iceland, the aide had accosted me. It was a quiet Saturday morning and few people were in the vicinity of the lake. I had just passed the front door of the Free Church when I saw the officer walking briskly towards me as if having come from the direction of the Air Port. He was obviously enjoying the walk and his carefree style gave me the impression that he had just arrived from the rigor of a bombed and blacked out London. Within a few yards of reaching me he hesitated, shortened his long stride, lessened the swing of his arms and said in a jolly voice, "Good

Morning". And before I could answer he said firmly without a smile: "Can you speak English?" It was obvious to me that the man was of first class breeding. His very attitude commanded respect and of course the absolute truth. He was a real Englishman, indeed as English as a Hampshire water meadow. I knew the type. Brought up in a world of discipline and character, where it was rude to cry over spilt milk and to show your feelings which was only reserved for old ladies and neurotics; where honesty was the price virtue and a British passport the most valued ticket to Paradise. I rather like the English, but the upper class I could never take seriously, so I replied to the question that I knew some English.

Without recognition of the fact the officer asked me if I could show him the way to the Borg Hotel. I replied that I could and with that I turned and we walked together in the direction of the centre of the town. On the way he asked me a few questions, nothing of any importance, about the weather, the people and the beer. Putting on an act I replied in idiomatically incorrect English and took pains in using the singular instead of the plural in reference to the people.

He showed no signs of being amused but told me that my English was 'good' although a little too hard. He advised a stay in England after the war was over and from the way he said it I was sure he knew who was going to win. At the door of the hotel he offered me, most politely, some remuneration for my guidance, which I refused.

That same evening I met him again, at a cocktail party in the Headquarters of the British Occupational Forces. Two of my former school friends, who were Army doctors, invited me. The Aide saw me, walked over to where I stood and much to the delight of my friends intimated that I had been the first Icelander he had met and said that I spoke jolly good English. I was glad no one let the pig out of the poke. I learned then that the Aide was in Iceland to prepare the way for the late Duke of Kent who was to take over a duty with the Air Force but who never reached Iceland. His airplane crashed in a Scottish mountain, killing all the occupants.

Lord Tweedsmuir and I finished our tea and talked. It was time to leave. The former Aide and his companion were still at their table. We rose and as I passed the man who thought I could improve my English by living in England after the war, he raised his head to look at me and I nodded and said "I think we've met". I think now that by getting a better view of my clerical collar a doubt crossed his mind but anyhow he replied with a faint smile. "And where could that be now?"

I recalled the incident beside the Reykjavik lake and then with a surprised look of awe he said. "Ah, yes, jolly good. The Icelander who speaks English". But you should have seen his face when I told him that really I was a Scot and the roar of laughter which followed almost, I felt, infringed on the dignity of that venerable Travelers' Club in the Pall Mall.

And one more anecdote before I close just to show you what I let myself into when I became an Icelander. Once a year I pay a visit to my widowed mother in Glasgow, Scotland. At Glasgow Air Port, as at all the others, there is the usual business of going

through the customs and immigration. There is nothing to smuggle from Iceland and they know that in Glasgow but when it comes to the immigration the officer wants to know, among other things, how long the foreigners are going to remain in the country they are entering.

Recently when I flew into Glasgow I lined up, as usual, to wait my turn to show the immigration man my Icelandic passport. He was a very young and snobbish Englishman, full of his own importance.

Unlike the Aide, I have referred to, this man had been brought up in a totally different way. His 'big shot' complex had not only been acquired by his issue of a braided jacket and cap. Anyhow when it came around to my turn to show my passport he viewed my name with some obvious suspicion—or disgust. "Glasgow" he muttered without looking up. That was in the column denoting my birthplace. Then while handing me back my passport he said sardonically with a frown on his chubby face. "And what are you going to do in this country?" He pronounced the words slowly and distinctly in a dialect which was neither from London or Yorkshire. Holding my passport in my hand I smiled and replied even as slowly. "Aund whit are yi daein' in this auld country?" I don't know whether the young loon was versed in British history or not, whether he understood me or not. Anyhow for a moment his wallies\* seemed to shake and I passed on into the city of my birth and into the language and literature and customs which he could never hope to appreciate.

Oh, these Sassenachs, they're all right if you get them on the right side, and that side, is South of the Scottish border.

\*Wallies—Scottish for false teeth.

# CHURCHILL

(Place name in Iceland)

by **Gudmundur Gudmundsson**

Translated from the Icelandic by Jakobina Johnson

My grandmother thus cautioned me — on Sundays never go  
In play to yonder churchill, when the sun is sinking low.  
You might disturb the service where the elves at vespers pray.  
Their church is up in yonder knoll and in youthful day  
I seemed to hear the fairy-hymns floating out at sunset.

My grandmother believed in this and I would never doubt  
Her tales of yonder churchill — or how they came about.  
I listened in my childlike faith with mingled awe and fear,  
Nor ever ventured there to play as eventide drew near.  
I seemed to hear the elfin bells call to church at sunset.

But with my years temptations gained — I now became possessed  
With longing to encounter what I had dimly guessed.  
Then, on a summer Sabbath-eve, beneath the sunset's glow  
I took the old forbidden path with measured step and slow.  
Within the knoll in unison chimed the bells at sunset.

There, as I came upon a passage rocky and steep,  
I heard the rising hymnal both resonant and deep.  
Then softly o'er the rocky knoll and my surroundings all  
A silence tense with mystery and reverence seemed to fall.  
Within the knoll in unison chimed the bells at sunset.

I stood transfixed upon the spot and gazed in silent awe,  
When lo — a door was opened and through the cliff I saw  
Such radiance incomparable and dazzling in its might —  
A house of God thrown open to lure — but not invite.  
Within the knoll in unison chimed the bells at sunset.

A glorious church interior — where gliding to and fro  
Were elves in shining garments. They seemed to come and go.  
An aged, white-haired figure prayed — then at the altar bowed.  
And over all a gauze-like haze — yet through it pealing loud  
The chiming bells in unison called to church at sunset.

A woman robed in pearly-white approached me at the door,  
And I was seized with tremors unknown to me before.  
Her radiant face and golden wand commanded me to go.  
Meanwhile her lips were forming words whose sound I do not know,  
For all the while the elfin bells called to church at sunset.

I turned away disturbed in mind beneath the sunset's gleam,  
Retraced my steps from churchill as in a waking dream.  
I knew my presence had intruded on that hallowed ground.  
And now with deep-toned mystery, increasingly profound,  
Those elfin bells in unison rang to church at sunset.

On Sundays when the mountain peaks reflect the afterglow,  
Though chimes from churchill tempt thee, I pray thee do not go!  
For thou wilt not recover from their strange and mystic spell,  
But hear persistent echoes reverberate and tell  
Of ever-luring elfin-rites calling thee at sunset.

## Old Icelandic Collection Comes To Light

It is a rare thing to come upon a century old publication on the North American continent but, indeed, such a discovery came to light in Winnipeg this summer. Discovered was not only one publication but an entire collection.

It is neatly recorded in the Coffee Break column of the July 21st edition of the Winnipeg Free Press. It reads as follows:

**Icelandic Items:—Thor Halldorson, 277** Toronto Street, dropped into the office with an interesting item. He has two years' issue of an Icelandic monthly periodical published 100 years ago in Akureyri, in the northeast corner of Iceland. His collection, bound in book form, starts at January, 1855.

The periodicals were passed on to him by his father Jonas Halldorson, who lived in Akureyri. They are in the Icelandic language.

An item in one, as translated by Mr. Halldorson, concerns a citizen of Paris, France, who had inherited a lot of money and was looking for a wife who was also wealthy so that they both could live in fine style. The comment of the paper was that no Icelandic girl would qualify because none had any money. Just shows how things change in 100 years.

For the information of readers of the Icelandic Canadian Thor Halldorson is the son of pioneers Jonas and Johanna Halldorson. In 1878 Jonas Halldorson came to New Iceland (Nyja Island and now Gimli district) on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg.

## BOOK REVIEW

### EGIL'S SAGA —

Translated from the Old Icelandic, with Introduction and Notes by Gwyn Jones. Published by the Syracuse University Press for The American Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1960. \$6.00.

*Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar* is one of the masterpieces of saga literature. This is really not surprising when one considers the epic nature of its subject matter and the fact that it was written by the greatest historian and literary master of the Middle Ages. There can be little doubt that its author is Snorri Sturluson, as Sigurður Nordal has so convincingly argued in the preface to his edition of the *Saga (Íslenzk fornrit, II, Reykjavík, 1933)*. Its pages record the lives and fortunes of four generations of one of the most prominent families in the early history of Iceland, and particularly the deeds and accomplishments of its greatest member, Egill the son of Skallagrímur. Egill was a fierce and ruthless Viking, but he was also a sensitive and highly gifted poet, an extreme individualist and a fine study in contrasts. It is this *Saga* which Professor Gwyn Jones has rendered into English.

The translation itself is prefaced by a thirty page Introduction in which Professor Jones discusses the background of the *Saga*, its sources, various historical problems and other matters. It must be pronounced sound, lucid and convincing, albeit rather brief. It is, however, the translation itself that principally engages our interest.

It is no light task to render into agreeable English the Icelandic of the sagas. In fact it is probably true to say that no one able to read them in the

original will ever be completely satisfied with any translation. The prose of the sagas is in general lucid and straightforward although what we know as archaisms occur frequently. The poetry is another matter. Skaldic verse with its, in most cases, highly technical form and its elaborate use of *kenningar* (circumlocutions and compounds) is completely alien to modern English. This, of course, is also true of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Both pose an almost insurmountable obstacle to a translator unless he be satisfied simply to render into prose the meaning of the stanzas forgetting the elaborate language and form of the original.

Professor Gwyn Jones translation of the prose parts of *Egils saga* is for the most part straightforward and clear. This and the enthralling subject matter of the *Saga* will carry the reader through the book with interest. I emphasise this advisedly in view of the criticisms I am now compelled to make. For it must be admitted, or so it seems to this reviewer, that the translation is considerably marred by archaisms, literalism and simply unhappy phrasing. On the first page, for example, we read: "his early manhood he spent viking and raiding;" and again "the tale runs that" as a translation of "svá er sagt". On p. 36 "menn stórlátir" is rendered "men of high stomach," and on the same page we read: "when they reached the king they told him everything Kveldúlf had delivered himself of to them." On page 48 we encounter: "Hárek struck into talk with the king," and "Speak you' said the king." "Hann er fullr upp úlfúðar" is translated "he is wolf to the throat of him" (p. 74).

On page 187 we find: "The quickest thing to say of it there was that they at once got off the path," and on page 218: "and soon it entered into their talk together that they debated of poetry." Thus one might go on, but I wish to turn to another matter.

This is the method employed by Professor Jones of writing the names of the characters in the *Saga* and his treatment of nicknames. It is annoying to me to read Egil and Ketil instead of the correct form Egill and Ketill. The same is true of Kveldúlf and Sighvat for Kveldúlfur and Sighvatr. In fact in one instance the dropping of the "r" transforms the masculine Herlaugr into the feminine Herlaug. A much better practice, it seems, would be to employ the proper Icelandic form except possibly where we are dealing with anglicised forms of long standing, such as Olaf rather than Ólafur.

To translate or not to translate nicknames is a nice question. My own preference is to leave them untranslated (except in the case of such elementary ones as "the Old" or "the Wise") and explain in a footnote the meaning of the nickname and, where possible, how it was acquired. What rule, if any, Professor Jones follows is difficult to see. In some cases he translates the name, e.g. Einar *skálaglamm* becomes Einar Jinglescale, in some instances there seems to be a half translation, e.g. *Auðun illskælda* becomes Audun Illskald, and in other cases the name is left untranslated, e.g. Thorbjörn Hornklofi. Some of the translations of nicknames seem to me grotesque, conveying small hint of the original, such as Yelling-Thorgils for Þorgils *gjallandi*. Nor am I impressed with the translation of *Oddr einbúi* as Odd Live-alone. More serious is the lack of any explanation of the meaning or origin of the nicknames in the *Saga*.

Of the poetry I will only say that I find Professor Jones' translation tortured and frequently very obscure. But mine is only one view and there is no accounting for taste. I quote here a couple of examples, the first from page 70, composed by Kveldúlfur shortly after he learned of the death of his son Þórólfr:

I learned in a northern island  
(Grim ally the Norn) too early  
Chose Thunder-God my champion:  
Thórólfr by foe lay fallen.  
Thor's wrestler, Age, Thought's rustler  
Slyly and sure as slowly  
Quells vengeance, cozens Kveldúlf;  
Hand lags, but how heart longeth.

The second occurs on page 190 and was composed by Egill when his host, Ármóðr, was attempting to get Egill and his companions drunk:

Quaff we off (through sea king  
Ekkil's beast-bestrider  
Ale-oceans haies to poet,  
Verse-speaker) every beaker.  
Not tot I'll leave, no spot,  
Though Ármóð's in mood to have  
borne

Cornmash-tarn in horn  
Till dawns the morrow's morn.

"Through" in the first line must be a misprint for "though".

A note explains that "Ekkil's bestrider" means "Rider of sea king Ekkil's steed or ship: seaman, man."

There are a number of good notes at the back of the book dealing with the geographical and historical background of the *Saga* and contemporary political and legal institutions. Some of the *kenningar* of the poetry are also explained here, but hardly enough. Lamentably, there is no index.

This handsomely produced volume should serve to make *Egils saga* better known among those who cannot read it in the original. —T. J. Oleson

## Large Donation To The University Of Iceland

On August 13, Dr. Thorkell Johannesson, Rector of the University of Iceland, announced that Mrs. Holmfridur Petursson, widow of the late Dr. Rognvaldur Petursson, and their daughter, Margret had donated \$7,500.00 to the University of Iceland towards the establishment of a foundation fund in memory of the late Dr. Petursson. The fund, to be known as the Dr. Rognvaldur Petursson Memorial Fund, will be doubled at the end of the year. For the time being the Fund will remain in Canada, bearing interest, but will be under the direction of the Board of Governors of the University of Iceland, administered in accordance with a charter which will prescribe the purposes of the Foundation and lay down rules and regulations for its management.



Mrs. Rognvaldur Petursson

In his announcement Dr. Johannesson paid a merited tribute to the late Dr. Rognvaldur Petursson, which may be transposed into English as follows:

"Tomorrow, August 14, eighty-three years will have passed since the birth of Dr. Rognvaldur Petursson, the well known leader among the Icelanders across the ocean. Dr. Petursson died on January 30, 1940, and though twenty years have passed, all, on both sides of the ocean, who knew him, have fresh in their memory the distinctive gifts and charming personality of



Miss Margret Petursson

this singularly gifted man. He was at once a world citizen in his attitude of mind and mental training and an intensely loyal Icelander. Dear to him above everything else was the land of his fathers and the heritage they had bequeathed. The honour of Iceland was

at all times uppermost in his mind. This is amply proven in his literary works and in his colossal industry as a leader in all undertakings in the West furthering the Icelandic cause. He was editor of the *Timarit*, the journal of The Icelandic National League, from the time it was founded until he passed away."

In his announcement Dr. Johannesson paid tribute, as well, to Mrs. Petursson and Margret. He recalled that Mrs. Petursson had previously donated to the National Library of Iceland a precious collection of books

and manuscripts—above any monetary valuation.

The collection Mrs. Petursson gave to the National Library included all the manuscripts of Stephan G. Stephansson, most of the Icelandic newspapers and periodicals published in the West, and innumerable volumes from one of the largest private libraries of Icelandic books in America.

It is a pleasure to The Icelandic Canadian to add its footnote of congratulations to the message of good wishes and appreciation extended to the donors by the Rector of the University of Iceland. —W. J. L.

## Golden Wedding Celebration

A Golden Wedding celebration was held in the Community Hall at Lundar on June 19th of this year in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Bjorn Bjornson. All the children of the bridal couple were present. They are: Bjorn Hogni, who works at the CNR; Gudmundur Eirikur, a school teacher in Winnipeg, married to Margaret Eirikson; Magnus, married to Kathleen Mansell; and Thorvaldur Stefan; Gudny Margaret, married to Geiri Eirikson, who farms near Lundar; Sigrun Petra, married to William Cruse, who farm near Chatfield; Lara Asthildur, married to Stefan Arnason, who farm near Lundar. There are 20 grand-children.

Mrs. Rannveig Gudmundson was mistress of ceremonies. Speakers included Mrs. Emma Renneessie from Gimli, John Thorgilson, Mrs. Sigrun Sigurdson (sister of the bridegroom), Kari Byron, Mrs. F. Snidal and Mr. Vigfus Guttormson, who also read an original poem. Gifts from the Ladies'

Aid Society Eining and from friends and members of the family were presented. Mr. and Mrs. G. Sigurdson came all the way from Langley Prairie, B. C. to attend the ceremony.

Messages of congratulations were received from friends far and near, among others from Rev. Albert Kristjanson, of Blaine, Washington, Rev. Emil Gudmundson, of Hanska, Minnesota, and from Rev. Philip M. Petursson, of Winnipeg.

Mr. and Mrs. Bjornson have taken a prominent part in the life of the community. Bjorn was a school board member for many years. Both worked in the interests of the Unitarian Church while it operated at Lundar. Bjorg belonged to the Womens' Institute, and has been a member of The Ladies' Aid Eining since it was founded in 1929, and has been president of it every year but one. The couple were very hospitable, and always welcomed visitors at their home, Laugas.

## Additional Graduates and Winners of Awards

### SASKATCHEWAN

#### Bachelor of Arts

**Shannon Howard Martin**, Wynyard,—with Distinction. (Grandson of Hjorleifur Hjorleifsson).

**Lyall Keith Moore**, Wynyard—(Grandson of the late Halldor J. Halldorson, formerly merchant and postmaster at Wynyard).

#### Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy

**Elin Sigridur Christina Johnson**, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

#### Elfros Boy Wins Essay Contest

Nine-year-old **Raymond Stephanson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Stephanson of Elfros, Sask., won the Historama Essay Contest of the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon last July. His essay was chosen from 1959 entries in the province in the Grades 3 and 4 division.

Mr. G. W. Crowder, secretary-treasurer of the Western Development Museum, advised him of his honor and extended the congratulations of Historama Committee the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and the Board of Directors of the Western Development Museum for the efforts put forth.

### MANITOBA

**Bachelor of Arts— Clara Wills.** Her parents are Kristin and Palmi Stef-

anson, Steep Rock. Her husband, Leslie Wills, graduated at the same time in Architecture. Clara has taught in Winnipeg for the last four years, and has studied at night school and summer school. She and her husband will go to England at the end of August, and Clara will teach there next year.



**Robert Frederickson**

**Robert Frederickson**, son of Mrs. L. Frederickson, Elmwood, Winnipeg, won an E. M. Brydon Memorial Scholarship for second highest standing in First Year Engineering—\$250.

**John David Thordarson**, formerly of Arborg and Westbourne, was one of four Manitobans who this summer were awarded scholarships totalling \$1,900 at the School of Business Ad-

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ministration, University of Western Ontario. Mr. Thordarson was given a Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing fellowship of \$500.00. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Manitoba.

**Sylvia Ethel Storry**—Diploma in Music A.M.M. While studying for her Diploma, Mrs. Storry has taught piano and done her housework. Her nine-year-old daughter Roslyn won praise for her piano playing at the Musical Festival in March. Mrs. Storry is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bjorn Guttormson of Winnipeg.

**Helga Anderson**—Diploma in Music A.M.M. (Associate in Music, Manitoba) Mrs. Anderson teaches singing and piano while studying. She is a daughter of Mrs. Valgerdur Baldwinson, and the late Sigvaldi Baldwinson, of Winnipeg.

**Miss Ruth Wynn Johnson**, daughter of Mrs. Albert Johnson (of Nell's Flower Shop) took the Grade V Music Examinatin with the Royal Conservatory of Music last spring and passed with First Class Honors. Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson was her teacher.

★

#### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**Linda Bergsteinson** is the only girl in 122 candidates who received a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the University of California

in Los Angeles last spring. She graduated with a high "B" standing. The Los Angeles Times of June 6 carried a photograph of Linda, and an interview.



Miss Linda Bergsteinson

She has accepted a position with the Aeronutronic Systems, Inc., a division of the Ford Motor Company. She is not the first scientist in the family. Her father is a chemical engineer. Her older sister majored in mathematics at Stanford University, and a younger brother is also majoring in mathematics at Stanford.

Linda is the daughter of Ingolfur Bergsteinson, Ph.D., son of Mrs. Thorunn Bergsteinson, and the late Hjortur Bergsteinson of Alameda, Saskatchewan, and Kristjana, daughter of Olafur and Gudrun Hallson, of Eriksdale, Manitoba.



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## IN THE NEWS

### TWO EDUCATIONISTS FROM ICELAND VISIT WINNIPEG

In July Dr. Thorkell Johannesson, Rector of the University of Iceland, and Birgir Thorlacius, Director in the Department of Education, were visitors in Winnipeg for a few days. During their stay they drove to Gimli to visit the Betel Home for the Aged.

On Wednesday, July 6, they were the guests of honour at a luncheon in the new Charterhouse Motor Hotel under the auspices of the Canada Iceland Foundation and The Icelandic National League. Dr. Johannesson is one of the committee of three of the Ísland-Kanada Ráð, the branch in Iceland of the Canada Iceland Foundation. Judge W. J. Lindal, Chairman of the Foundation, in charge of the luncheon with Rev. Philip M. Petursson, in his introductory remarks paid tribute to the Ísland-Kanada Ráð for the excellent work done in selecting and recommending top rate scholars for non-resident Fellowships awarded by the Canada Council. About 50 countries compete for the Fellowships and only about 40 are awarded, yet a Fellowship of \$2,000 and travelling expenses has been awarded to scholars from Iceland during the three years the overseas awards have been made.

The recipient for the coming year is Sveinn Skorri Höskuldsson, and he will be attending the University of Manitoba and at the same time will be doing research work in connection with the literary works of Gestur Pálsón and Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran.

Rev. Philip M. Petursson welcomed the guests on behalf of The Icelandic

National League and presented Dr. Johannesson with an Honorary Life Membership in the League.

Representatives of other organizations had been invited to the luncheon. Mrs. Ingibjorg Jonsson spoke on behalf of Logberg-Heimskringla, Gunnar Eggertson on behalf of The Icelandic Canadian Club, and Jon Laxdal on behalf of the Icelandic Day Celebration Committee.

Both Dr. Johannesson and Mr. Thorlacius replied, expressing their appreciation of the opportunity of meeting representatives of Icelandic organizations in Winnipeg. They extended greetings from Iceland to Vestur-Íslandingar.

★

### DR. LUTHER B. KRISTJANSON

Appointed Assistant Deputy Minister



In July Dr. Luther Burbank Kristjanson of Winnipeg was appointed as-

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sistant deputy minister of agriculture for the province of Manitoba, the first time in the history of the province an assistant to the deputy minister has been appointed.

Until his appointment Dr. Kristjanson was administrator of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Agency, a provincial government establishment. He joined the Manitoba department of agriculture as an extension economist three years ago and became director of the government's crop insurance agency a year ago.

Dr. Kristjanson obtained his B.S.A. degree from North Dakota State College and his M. Sc. degree in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska. He is presently working towards his doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Kristjanson was born and raised in the Gimli district in the Interlake region of Manitoba, the son of Mrs. Elin Kristjanson and the late Hannes Kristjanson.

★

#### CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Páll Pálsson, Gimli, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on June 15th of this year. Mr. Pálsson is the author of three books of poetry, entitled "Norðurreykir", "Skilarétt", and "Eftirleit", and one book about travels in Iceland, "Ferðaminningar".

Mr. and Mrs. Pálsson have one daughter, Margaret, Mrs. A. D. Ramsay, of Fort Garry. She held a reception at her home in honor of the event, with 150 guests present. Master of ceremonies was Jakob F. Kristjanson. Two poets, Gisli Jonsson and Dr. S. E. Bjornson read original poems. Judge

W. J. Lindal gave a toast to the bridegroom in the course of which he read verses from poems by Páll, both in original Icelandic and in English translations by himself. Mrs. Maria Bjornson gave a toast to the bride and on behalf of friends presented her with a bouquet of flowers. Rev. Philip M. Petursson extended greetings and Chris V. Einarson spoke on behalf of relatives and little Paul Ramsay presented his grandparents with a gift from the family. Gifts from friends were also presented.

Greetings were received from Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Lieutenant-Governor Errick Willis, Premier Duff Roblin, and Mayor Stephen Juba.

Born in Iceland, Mr. Pálsson came to Canada in 1900, Mrs. Pálsson in 1904. They were married at her parents' home in Leslie, Sask., by Rev. Einar Vigfusson, in 1910. The couple made their home in Winnipeg, where Mr. Pálsson was with the Great-West Life Assurance Co. as accountant. In 1907 he joined the North West Grain Commission, Ltd. Upon his retirement in 1952 the couple left Winnipeg and moved to their home "Alfaborg" in Gimli.

★

#### HONOR BESTOWED ON STANLEY T. OLAFSON

A veteran executive in the business community of the city of Los Angeles in the state of California, Stanley T. Olafson was signally honored in May on the eve of his retirement after three decades of service with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

Retiring in July as manager of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce world trade department, Mr. Olafson was made an honorary commodore of the Port of Los Angeles. He was presented with the award by Dr. Elton C.

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Spires, vice-president of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners.

The occasion was the observance of World Trade Week which Mr. Olafson himself originated in 1927. From the seed of an idea planted by Mr. Olafson 33 years ago, World Trade Week has grown to national prominence. Over the years it has been the subject of annual presidential proclamation.

The trophy given Mr. Olafson, emblematic of his honorary commodore's post, resembles a ship's bell and a pilot's wheel. The presentation took place at the Executive's Harbor Day luncheon at the Matson Terminal.

Honorary commodore of the Port of Los Angeles is the most recent of wide-ranging recognitions for Mr. Olafson. He formerly functioned as president of the Foreign Trade Association of Southern California, is a member and past commander of the Merchant Marine Post No. 420 of the Los Angeles American Legion. In recognition of outstanding contributions for the cause of world trade in the area he received the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce bronze plaque, received an honorary degree of Master of Business Administration from Woodbury College, and over the years has been decorated by the governments of The Netherlands, West Germany, Iceland and Belgium.

Since 1944 Mr. Olafson has been consul of Iceland in Los Angeles and will continue in this capacity.

★

#### TEENAGER FROM ICELAND VISITS WINNIPEG

Miss Heida Palson of Reykjavik, Iceland, had some interesting observations to make from the teenager's point of view during a vacation this summer in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Heida, who

is 16, was visiting her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Jonasson, 132 Oak Street.

Among other things Heida said television, football and bowling are things not found in Reykjavik. In Winnipeg she found football exciting, bowling different and television fascinating. "She watches almost anything because it is new to her," Mrs. Jonasson explained.

In Reykjavik, Heida said, she studies English in school, but the lessons stress reading and writing rather than the conversational. She said Icelandic children have a choice of English, Danish, French or German, with emphasis on French and German when students enter fourth year in university. This is completed normally at the age of about 20 and the student then goes on to specialize.

Heida explained that the grading system in Iceland is different to that in Canada in that no number is given to each year. She began school at 7 and in Iceland she has reached what would be the equivalent to a Canadian Grade 10. Icelandic schools open October 1.

Heida said the only difference between Winnipeg and Reykjavik is Winnipeg's flatness. People dress the same and the new homes in Reykjavik are as modern as the new homes in Winnipeg.

★

#### APPOINTED DIRECTOR

John Guttormsson of Lundar this fall was named to the board of directors of Betel, the Icelandic elderly citizens' home at Gimli, Man. Mr. Guttormsson, who is a Lundar businessman, was born at Riverton, Man., the son of Mr. and Mrs. Vigfus Guttormsson, Interlake area pioneers.

#### CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING

Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Skaptason of 548 Agnes Street, Winnipeg, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Sept. 11 when they received relatives and friends at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Skaptason, 862 Minto Street, Winnipeg. They were married in the Icelandic Lutheran Church in Winnipeg in 1910 and over the years have lived in St. Vital, Glenboro, Ashern and Winnipeg. Mr. Skaptason was born at Gimli, Man., in 1884, the son of one of the very early Icelandic settlers. Mrs. Skaptason, the former Anna Freeman, was born in Saskatchewan. She is a charter member of Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E. They are both members of the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg. They have four sons, Joseph B. and J. Skapti of Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A., and Freeman and Marlius of Winnipeg. There are eight grandchildren.

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**Mr. and Mrs. Gudjon Hallson** of 539 Victor Street, Winnipeg, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Sept. 11, when they received relatives and friends in the afternoon and evening at the home of their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Boehm, 590 Lansdowne Avenue, Winnipeg. Mr. and Mrs. Hallson were both born in Iceland and were married in Winnipeg September 10, 1910, by the late Rev. Jon Bjarnason. They have since lived in Winnipeg except for 12 years during which they farmed at Lundar, Manitoba. Mr. Hallson is a lather by trade and has been associated with the Independent Order of Good Templars for more than 22 years. They have three children, Dody, Mrs. Boehm, and sons Eyvi and John, all of Winnipeg. There are four grandchildren.

★

The two Doctors in Botany, Doris Löve and Áskell Löve, continue with their usual energy and zeal, in their specialized field. Scientific studies based upon their researches and field work are readily accepted for publication in scientific journals. The following have come to hand recently.

Flora and Vegetation of the Otterburne Area, Manitoba, by Doris Löve and Jean-Paul Bernard, published in *Svensk-Botanisk Tidskrift*, Uppsala, Sweden, 1959.

The Postglacial Development of the Flora of Manitoba: A Discussion, by Doris Löve, published in *Canadian Journal of Botany*, 1959.

Biosystematics of the Black Crowberries of America, by Áskell Löve and Doris Löve, published in *Canadian Journal of Genetics and Cytology*, 1959.

Biosystematics and the Processes of Speciation, by Áskell Löve, published in *Evolution: Its Science and Doctrine*, 1960.

#### ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Grettir Eggertson of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was among three re-elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting in Reykjavik in June of the Icelandic Steamship Lines. Re-elected with Mr. Eggertson were Richard Thors, general manager, and Birgir Kjaran.

★

#### RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT

Rev. Eric H. Sigmar was re-elected president at the 75th annual conference of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod of the Western Hemisphere held in the Argyle district near Baldur and Glenboro in southern Manitoba in June.

Rev. Valdimar J. Eylands was re-elected vice-president, Donald Olsen secretary and Oscar Bjorklund re-elected treasurer.

Others named to the synod board were Rev. Jack Larson, Rev. Norman Nelson, Ray Vopni, Halldor Bjarnason, Dr. Frank Scribner and Arni Josephson.

Elected delegates to the conference of United Lutheran Churches in America at Atlantic City in October were Mr. Sigmar, Mr. Olsen, Dr. Scribner and Mr. Josephson.

★

#### 60th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. and Mrs. Thordur Anderson** of 1040 Sherburn Street, Winnipeg, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary September 4th at a family dinner party given by their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Bjornson, 853 Sherburn Street. Two days later Mr. and Mrs. Anderson left by air for Toronto to visit their daughter, Mrs. I. C. Ingimundson, their son Norton J. and other members of their family in the east.



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## NEWS SUMMARY

His many years of service with the Icelandic Lutheran Church in North America were recalled with the death, August 2, at Bismark, North Dakota, of Rev. Bjorn Theodore Sigurdsson at the age of 53. Mr. Sigurdsson was born in Seattle, Washington, the son of the late Rev. and Mrs. Jonas Sigurdsson. He received his education in Saskatchewan, at Seattle and at the Western Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was ordained in 1934. He served at Lundar in Manitoba and Mountain in North Dakota, and for a period in Iceland. Surviving are his wife, Johanna, one son, Hannes, sister Elin, Mrs. Hannes Kristjanson, and one brother, Dr. Jon Sigurdsson. The funeral was held in Selkirk, Manitoba, where burial took place.

★

Sigurgeir Jonsson and his wife, Ingibjorg Gisladottir, both from Reykjavik, returned to Iceland this summer after spending two years in California during which Mr. Jonsson pursued studies in political economy at Stanford University. Prior to returning to Iceland they took a trip into Canada and visited friends in Manitoba.

★

Glen Eyford of Winnipeg with Mrs. Eyford and family returned to Canada this summer after spending two years in Iceland where Mr. Eyford was in the service of the film section of the depart-

ment of education. With them came their two children, both born in Iceland. Mr. Eyford will begin duties with the University of Alberta this fall.

★

Warm tribute was paid to Dr. Haraldur and Mrs. Sigmar by friends and relatives who gathered June 25 in the Monticello Hotel in Long View, Washington, to honor them on the occasion of their 46th wedding anniversary. Dr. Sigmar, a graduate in Arts of United College in Winnipeg, and past president of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, has reached the age of three score and fifteen.

★

The Department of Natural Resources of the province of Saskatchewan announced in July that an island in the northern part of the province has been named after an Icelandic couple who pioneered in the Wynyard district. The island is now called Bjornson Island, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Oli Bjornson. It is situated in Reindeer Lake, some 300 miles north and west of the city of Prince Albert. Mr. and Mrs. Bjornson settled at Wynyard in 1907.

★

Miss Sylvia Einarson of Hnaua was one of eight contestants for the title of Manitoba Dairy Queen at the Provincial Exhibition at Brandon in July. The title was won by Miss Janice John-

ston of Rossburn who next spring goes to Toronto to compete for the Dairy Queen of Canada crown.

★

Svanhildur Jakobsdottir from Reykjavik was Miss Iceland in the Miss Universe contest held in July at Miami Beach, Florida, U.S.A. Miss United States, in the person of Miss Linda Belmont of Salt Lake City, Utah, won the Miss Universe crown.

★

Miss Leslee Gislason, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Gislason of Riverton, Manitoba, and a patient at the Shriners' Hospital For Crippled Children in Winnipeg, is the first Girl Guide in a Manitoba extension company to win a blue first class badge. She was presented with the award at the hospital in June by Mrs. W. G. Thomas, extension chairman for Manitoba of the Canadian Girl Guides' Association, and Mrs. Bruce Bagart, captain of the 117th Extension Company of which Leslee is a member. The company meets Saturday mornings at the hospital.

★

On August 21, about 250 people gathered together in one of the parks in Long Beach, California. The gathering was arranged to give Vestur-Islandingum and others an opportunity to see and meet Sirry (Sigríður) Geirsdottir, who won the photogenic contest and was third in the Miss Universe Beauty Contest. Sumi Swanson presided and his wife, Olive, addressed Sirry and on behalf of the Islingafelag presented her with a special Oscar. Consul Stanley Olafson conveyed greetings from Hon. Thor Thors. An excellent programme of music was provided, fol-

lowing which Sigríður addressed the gathering. She said that, with so many Icelanders present, she felt as if she were in her homeland, and that it all was a beautiful dream which had come true.

★

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### ICELANDIC MALE VOICE CHOIR ITINERARY

The following is the itinerary of the Icelandic Male Voice Choir from Reykjavik, Icel. which arrives in New York October 1st, and begins a concert tour of the United States and Canada on October 3.

October 1st Arrive in New York  
October 4, Wilkes Barre, Penn.  
October 4, Wilmington, Delaware  
October 5, Waynesboro, Penn.  
October 6, Hazelton, Penn.  
October 8, Sandusky, Ohio  
October 9, Mount Vernon, Ohio  
October 10 Goshen, Indiana

October 11, Benton Harbour, Mich.  
October 12, Alpena, Michigan  
October 15, Beaver Dam, Wis.  
October 17, Fairmont, Minnesota  
October 18, Brookings, S. Dakota  
October 19, Fargo N. Dakota  
October 21, WINNIPEG, Manitoba  
October 22, WINNIPEG, Manitoba  
October 23, ARBORG, Manitoba  
October 24, International Falls,  
Minnesota  
October 25, Crookston, Minnesota  
October 26, Bemidji, Minnesota  
October 27, Winona, Minnesota  
October 28, Mount Pleasant, Iowa  
October 31, Niagara Falls, Ontario

November 1, Rochester, New York  
November 2, Oneonta, New York  
November 3, Chicopee, Mass.  
November 4, Reckland, Maine  
November 5, Moncton, N. B.  
November 7, St. John, N. B.  
November 8, Fredericton, N. B.  
November 9, Dartmouth, N. S.  
November 10 Halifax, N. S.  
November 14, Mount Royal, Quebec  
November 15, Montpelier, Vt.  
November 17, Easton, Penn.  
November 18, Westfield, N. J.  
November 19, Bridgeton, N. J.  
November 20, Departure from New York.

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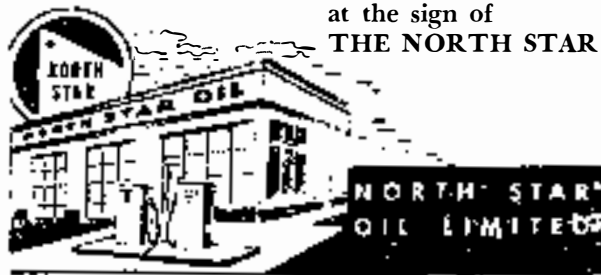
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