

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF LABRADOR

[Review of *Outlines of the geography, life and customs of Newfoundland-Labrador (the eastern part of the Labrador peninsula). Based upon observations made during the Finland-Labrador Expedition in 1937, and the Tanner Labrador Expedition in 1939, and upon information available in the literature and cartography.* Cambridge, 1947, 2 vols.; reprinted from *Acta Geographica Fenniae*, Tom. 8, No. 1, 1944.]

This study of Newfoundland-Labrador (hereafter referred to as Labrador) was written in English by Professor Tanner, who led two expeditions to Labrador, the first in 1937 with Dr E. H. Kranck, geologist and geographer, and Dr I. Hustich, botanist; the second in 1939 with Dr Alexander Forbes of Harvard Medical School, and Carl-Gosta Wenner, peat geologist.

The main purpose of these expeditions was to attempt a comparison of the geology of Fenno-Scandia and Laurentia, and to link the synchronous formations of the Old with the New World. The results of this particular investigation are to be published separately. The volumes here reviewed, covering the whole range of geographical study, are the most comprehensive and up-to-date work on Labrador. They are valuable because they gather together the observations of many travellers and scientists, skilfully arranged and so illustrated that photographs and text are a unity. They are valuable also because the bibliography and the index of maps, ranging from 1656 to date of publication, bring together the material available in the libraries of Scandinavia, Great Britain and North America.

Vol. I commences with a survey of the history and cartography of Labrador, and continues with sections on geology, physiography, oceanography, meteorology and climate, botany and zoology.

Vol. II is an anthropological study of the Indian, Eskimo and White population, concluding with a survey of the welfare work of the International Grenfell Association and of the Moravian Mission; with an analysis of industry and trade.

To some extent Labrador has been neglected by scientific explorers, many of whom may perhaps have been attracted farther north. The tangled forests of the southern half of Labrador discourage movement, and it was only during the recent war that systematic mapping, by air, with a minimum of ground control, was undertaken. Nevertheless, sufficient is known of the geology to arrive at an understanding of the physiographic development, and to open the way to comparison with Fenno-Scandia. Professor Tanner interprets the coastal highland as a Pliocene peneplane warped up to its present altitude of over 5000 ft.; and the lower lying surface west of it as comprising several facets, of Pliocene and pre-Pliocene age. Although there is no clear evidence of more than one glaciation, the author presumes that Labrador, like other parts of North America, was affected by several glacial and interglacial stages. The ice-sheet is thought to have initiated from the coalescence of valley glaciers. Its centre of flow shifted according to changing conditions of nourishment. In the waning stages progressive thinning of the ice was a major factor. Instrumental levelling along many stretches of the shoreline was undertaken to

elucidate the contemporaneous character of the series of raised beaches, and to relate these levels to isostatic recovery during the post-glacial epoch. The study of oceanography is mainly concerned with the Labrador Current. This current is mainly responsible for the difference in climate and vegetation between Labrador and similar latitudes in the British Isles.

With a total population in 1935 of only 4716 persons, over 1000 were Eskimo, 270 Montagnais and Naskaupi Indian and the remainder pure or mixed white. While the Naskaupi are thought to have decreased within the last half century, the Montagnais have, if anything, slightly increased. In 1770 the Moravian Mission established the first reservation, and encouraged the Eskimo to base their activities on a permanent home, thus saving the Eskimo from extinction. Only complete freedom from outside contact could have preserved the original culture, but much has been accomplished. These, the most southerly Eskimo of the world, have adapted themselves, and by intermarriage with the "Liveyere" settlers are no longer in danger of extinction. The pattern of economic life, involving transhumance, and in the case of the trappers at the head of Hamilton Inlet, a journey of 300 miles to trapping grounds and months of isolation from their families each winter, is complex. The rapid evolution and interrelation of three distinct cultures provides interesting study for the anthropologist.

Professor Tanner ends with a confident prediction for the future of Labrador. To-day, economic development may not long be delayed. Surveying for the construction of a railway from the Gulf of St Lawrence to the interior has been commenced. A large airport, at Goose Bay, has been in operation since 1941. The people of Newfoundland and of Labrador are about to decide on the future political structure of their country. Geographical conditions inevitably set limits for future as for past opportunities, but with modern techniques, and given mobility of labour and capital investment, it should be possible to prevent a recurrence of the semi-permanent poverty and starvation which existed before the war.

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## RESTORATION OF THE *GJØA* AT SAN FRANCISCO

[Information supplied on 5 October 1947 by Mrs Nora A. Blichfeldt of San Francisco.]

The *Gjøa*, the ship in which Roald Amundsen made the first voyage through the North-West Passage in 1903-07, has been lying in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, since 1907, when Amundsen presented it to the city. Before the Second World War those parts of the vessel which had deteriorated were removed and the framework of the ship was rebuilt. Early in 1947 the *Gjøa* Foundation, whose President is the Norwegian Consul General in San Francisco, Herr Jorgen Galbe, appealed for funds to complete the work of restoration. These funds were raised with the help of contributions from the Norwegian Government and the City and County of San Francisco. The *Gjøa* Foundation is now in a position to restore the ship.