

# THE POLAR RECORD

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## FOREWORD

Everyone interested in the history of the Arctic will have noted that last year saw the accomplishment of the first west-to-east successful navigation of the North-West Passage.

The Auxiliary schooner, *St Roch*, manned by eight members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, reached Sydney, Nova Scotia, on October 9 last year after a twenty-eight months' voyage from Vancouver via the Arctic. We hope to print an account of the voyage in a future issue of *The Polar Record*. Meanwhile it is pleasant to record the prompt award by H.M. the King, in December last, of the Polar Medal in silver to Sergeant H. A. Larsen, Corporal M. F. Foster and the six constables who constituted the crew.

After centuries of effort, the first successful navigation through the North-West Passage from east-to-west was made in 1903-05 by Roald Amundsen in the *Gjøa*. No other ship has passed right through, although the *Nascopie* from the Atlantic and the *Aklavik* from the Pacific met in Bellot Strait in 1937 and again at Fort Ross in 1938. Few attempts at the west-to-east route have been made. The best known is that of Collinson and McClure in 1850-54. McClure was forced to abandon his ship, the *Investigator*, in the Bay of God's Mercy on Banks Island. He sledged eastwards to Lancaster Sound and joined Belcher's squadron. On his return to England in 1854 he and his officers and crew were awarded the prize of £10,000 offered by the British Government for the discovery of a North-West Passage, though many have criticised this award as unjustified.

The voyage of the *Gjøa* appears to have been of longer duration than that now completed by the *St Roch*, but it will be remembered that one of Amundsen's principal objects was to take magnetic observations, and he deliberately spent two winters at King William Island.

Dr Boas, whose death has recently been announced, was one of America's leading anthropologists. To Arctic specialists his outstanding work was his systematic accounts of the Central Eskimo. His own visit to Baffin Island was made as far back as 1883-84, and it was notable for a sledge journey employing "living on the land" methods. Dr Boas was as much at home with the Eskimo as Stefansson and Rasmussen in later days. He understood their language and appreciated their ways, and his pioneer effort has set a fine example of combination of scientist and explorer.

Our readers will have noted that our last number was the closing one of the series for Volume 3. An index for this volume is being prepared, but under present conditions there is likely to be considerable delay in its publication. Our printers kindly kept the format the same until that volume was complete, and the changes in this issue are due to the regulations governing the economic use of paper.