

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JT-1

Alesund
Norway
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Mr. Walter S: Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The expedition ship RUNDØY is now nearly ready to leave for Greenland, though the actual sailing time is uncertain - probably sometime tomorrow. RUNDØY is a Norwegian seal hunter, and the nonchalant casualness of the crew, which is apparently typical, precludes the setting in advance of any definite sailing time: we leave when we are ready. The making ready is done with un-hurried thoroughness.

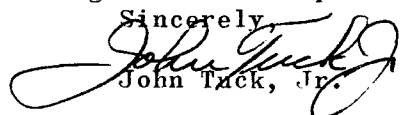
While in England I visited both the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge and the Royal Geographical Society in London. At Cambridge I also had an opportunity to talk briefly with Sir James Wordie, who sailed with Shackleton in the ENDEAVOR, and with Professor Frank Debenham, who was with Scott. Wordie, who is about 69 and nearly ready to retire as Master of St. John's College, is definitely showing his age. This was evident in talking with him, and was mentioned by others in advance. The visit was highly interesting, though the conversation tended to ramble a bit. Prof. Debenham, on the other hand, appears to have the alertness and vigor of a much younger man, though he is, I believe, somewhat older than Wordie. Both retain a strong interest in the polar regions, and Debenham expressed a strong feeling that there should be a greater interchange of students in this field between the U.S. and Great Britain.

The Scott Polar Research Institute (commonly abbreviated to PRI) has just recently undergone a change of directors, with Gordon Robin replacing Dr. Colin Bertram. What changes this will mean I don't know as yet; Robin was more or less feeling his way, apparently, and remarked that he'd had to do "very little directing, as PRI pretty much runs itself."

In London I was privileged to have dinner with Dr. Kirwan, Director of the Royal Geographical Society, and Professor Gerasimov of the Russian Academy of Science. Gerasimov was just completing a two-week tour of Great Britain under the aegis of the RGS. He speaks almost no English, but fortunately a good interpreter was present. The tour was evidently quite successful in all respects. Gerasimov expressed considerable interest in, and hope for, greater exchanges of scientific personnel between the USSR and the western countries. A Soviet delegation is to visit the US for a month next year, and Gerasimov expects to be a member of this group. If this exchange goes well, there may be greater freedom allowed in the exchange of individuals for longer periods of time.

The foremost purpose of this summer's expedition to Greenland, which consists of three Americans, six Norwegians, and a Dane, is a study of the gases entrapped in glacier ice. Primary studies are the general analysis of the gases, oxygen-isotope analysis, and radio-carbon dating. Twenty tons of ice will be required for each gas sample, and the collection of this amount of ice is the major unknown factor. The ice will be obtained from bergs and reduced by melting under vacuum aboard ship. There is a definite challenge, and the promise of a breakthrough in a new aspect of basic research.

Sincerely,


John Tack, Jr.