

free to approach Canada with a request to be financially compensated for his Arctic work. If such compensation was offered, and if Canada agreed to guarantee Norwegian citizens certain rights in the Sverdrup Islands, the Norwegian government would formally recognize Canada's title.³⁵ None of this information, of course, was known in Ottawa, and neither Sverdrup nor his representative, Eivind Bordewick, ever said anything about the proviso they had been asked to obtain.

In May 1929, Bordewick approached Prime Minister King on Sverdrup's behalf (doc. 438). The members of the NAB, confident in Canada's case and sceptical of Sverdrup's claim that he had validly taken possession of the territory, nevertheless concluded that formal Norwegian acknowledgement "might be worth something" (docs 445-447). Bordewick was therefore given reason to hope for a favourable outcome, but he was firmly rebuffed when he pushed for a quick decision by Canada (docs 449-451). The British government, meanwhile, was irritated when Norway once again attempted to use the Sverdrup Islands as a pawn, this time in negotiations over its claim to Jan Mayen Island (docs 440, 452). When Skelton visited London in the autumn of 1929, it was agreed that compensation for Sverdrup was probably the key to resolving the matter, although the British could also turn Oslo's strategy back on the Norwegians by insisting that the Sverdrup Islands matter be concluded before the UK would recognize their claim to Jan Mayen (doc. 463).

Once back in Ottawa, however, Skelton found his colleagues on the NAB reluctant to offer as much money as Sverdrup wanted. The explorer had initially asked for \$200,000, but in December 1929 he indicated his willingness to accept \$100,000. However, the members of the Board felt that \$25,000, along with a pension of \$2,400 a year, should be sufficient (docs 473, 477). The deadlock was finally broken when Bordewick suggested \$25,000 plus a capitalization of the pension, amounting to \$67,000 in total (doc. 484). The deal was then concluded on the basis that Sverdrup would provide his original journals, notes, and charts and that the Norwegian government would recognize Canadian sovereignty (docs 480, 488, 489).

No sooner was this arrangement made than Norwegian officials brought forward their proviso about special rights for Norwegian citizens (doc. 490). When the British minister in Oslo demurred on Canada's behalf (doc. 498), the Norwegians did not seem to wish to press the matter. However, when Norway

³⁵ Thorleif Tobias Thorleifsson, "Norway 'Must Really Drop Their Absurd Claims Such as That to the Otto Sverdrup Islands.' Bi-Polar International Diplomacy: The Sverdrup Islands Question, 1902-1930," Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2006, p. 65. This thesis was the first study of the Sverdrup Islands issue to use declassified Norwegian files, and it contains much valuable information. However, the author did not see all the Canadian and British documents printed here. These documents indicate a need to modify some of Thorleifsson's conclusions. In particular, he attributes certain decisions to Skelton that should more properly be credited to Finnie, who counselled Skelton and helped him to avoid at least one serious mistake (see docs 511, 512).