

resumed. As a result, future government activities in the Far North would be more orderly and consistent, but not very widely publicized.

The period began with an appeal to Prime Minister Laurier from the flamboyant, ambitious Bernier for government assistance with his planned expedition to the North Pole (doc. 88; see also docs 95, 96, 97, 98). However, Bernier's proposed route lay outside the Canadian sector, and therefore his proposal evoked little interest from either Laurier or Dawson, to whom the request was referred. Bernier would later claim that he had fruitlessly attempted to bring the sovereignty problem to the government's attention, but in fact his North Pole plans had no bearing whatever on sovereignty. Instead, Bernier saw them as a means of bringing glory to himself and to Canada. Sovereignty matters gradually worked their way to the forefront of the government's concerns through warnings from various sources about violations of the customs and liquor laws by American whalers in the western Arctic (docs 91, 92, 93, 94, 99, 100) and about over-hunting of muskoxen by Americans in the eastern Arctic (docs 101, 103).

Comptroller White was now a strong proponent of action in the North (see doc. 99). By the end of 1902, Sifton had come to share and even to exceed his zeal (doc. 105). Soon White began to resent Sifton's imperious directives, in large part because Sifton was not the Minister with formal authority over the NWMP.¹⁴ Further difficulties arose through the involvement of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, which was growing ever more notorious for its degree of patronage and outright corruption. White felt that he was being pressured into hasty action, and that the police would be held responsible for the possible poor outcome of plans formulated by other departments. Despite the ensuing bureaucratic clashes, two expeditions were sent out in 1903, and posts were established at Fort McPherson, Herschel Island, and Cape Fullerton.

Another significant result of Sifton's interest in the Arctic was the sovereignty report written by W.F. King (see docs 128, 138). This report was the first detailed attempt by a Canadian civil servant to survey the entire question of Canada's title to the archipelago. It was far from perfect: Dawson had died in 1901, and without his accumulated knowledge to draw on, King struggled at times to understand how and why the existing situation had come about. Nevertheless, his report sensibly concluded that while Canada's title might be lacking in some respects, the exercise of government jurisdiction in the North was the obvious way to strengthen it.¹⁵

The Department of the Interior's geographer, James White (fig. 15), produced the maps that accompanied King's report. Formerly a member of the GSC, White had worked closely with both Dawson and Deville, and he evidently took a strong interest in the developing sector theory. The discovery of new islands in the archipelago by the Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup during his 1898-1902

¹⁴ Memorandum by Lord Minto, 20 October 1902, LAC, MG 27 II B-1, vol. 2.

¹⁵ W.F. King, *Report upon the Title of Canada to the Islands North of the Mainland of Canada* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1905), p. 8.