

while possessing the entire archipelago was in Canada's national interest, a conflict with Russia over Wrangel Island was not. Accordingly, the sector principle appealed to these men on practical grounds. In 1922, James White became the Minister of Justice's adviser on boundary issues, and thus he was once again involved in sovereignty discussions. White worked behind the scenes to discredit Stefansson's Wrangel plans – an endeavour in which he was highly successful. At some point in 1923 White made contact with Finnie and Craig, and by early 1925 he was among the first people they turned to for advice.

In the summer of 1924, on Finnie's advice, Ottawa finally decided that there would be no Canadian claim to Wrangel Island (docs 321-325). By that time, four Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) posts had been established in the archipelago: two on Baffin Island, one on Ellesmere Island, and one on Devon Island. Finnie and Craig were convinced that there must be an ongoing and ever-expanding program of occupation. The RCMP Commissioner, Cortlandt Starnes, was reluctant to see more of his men stationed on the uninhabited islands north of Lancaster Sound. Instead, Starnes favoured additional posts on Baffin Island, so that the police could oversee the interactions between white traders and Inuit. Finnie and Craig, however, were determined to create a stronger Canadian presence in the high Arctic, and they were also aware of the need to track and regulate foreign exploration there (doc. 335). Following reports that the American Donald MacMillan had broken Canadian game laws during his 1923 expedition, they intended to ensure there would be no further violations in 1925 (doc. 329).

#### **Part Four, 1925-1928**

At the beginning of 1925, an unprecedented number of foreign explorers were planning expeditions to the Canadian Arctic; some of them intended to employ aviation as a means of searching for the ever-elusive northern continent. As well, Norway made the first in a series of inquiries about the basis for Canada's claim to the Sverdrup Islands (doc. 339). The Norwegian note was sent to the Department of External Affairs, but the Under-Secretary, Sir Joseph Pope, was then on the verge of retirement, and his successor, O.D. Skelton, had not yet taken up his duties. The Norwegian query was therefore sent to Finnie, who turned to Joseph Bernier and James White.

Bernier characteristically suggested a proclamation (doc. 342). White, in contrast, produced a detailed memo in which Sverdrup's actions – so far as they were known through his published narrative – were carefully recounted, and the rival claims of Norway and Canada were examined from the legal point of view (doc. 343). White pointed out the lack of any official Norwegian claim to, or further activity in, the Sverdrup Islands. On Canada's side, in terms of an actual presence in the Sverdrup Islands, there was only Stefansson's visit during the Canadian Arctic Expedition. But in White's view, the archipelago must be viewed as a single geographical entity. Through the sector lines, Canada had laid claim to all the islands, and it had embarked on a process that would ultimately lead to effective occupation throughout the archipelago. White also addressed the