

dark walls as feet thumped and stamped and the voices of men, women and children joined in song. On the stroke of midnight, in the greatest good humour, the visitors went ashore to their homes.

It was indeed a wonderful Christmas Day — a time for charity in the best sense of the word, a time for mystery and wonder, a time for children. In the silence of the long Arctic winter men had time to think on these things. Duncan Campbell Scott struck a note in tune with this when he wrote:

But here a peace deeper than peace is
furl'd, enshrined and chalic'd from the
changeful hour;
the snow is still, yet lives in its own light;
here is the peace which brooded day and
night before the heart of man with its wild
power had ever spurn'd or trampled the
great world.

"Arctic's" successor world's first heavy icebreaking cargo ship

Transport Minister Otto Lang announced on November 20 that Canada would build what is said to be the world's first heavy icebreaking cargo ship for use in the Canadian Arctic. It will be named MV *Arctic*, after the first ship of that name, which made a significant contribution to Arctic exploration earlier in this century, commanded by Joseph-Elzéar Bernier of l'Islet Quebec.

The new ship, which will be able to operate independent of icebreaker support, will be built and run by the Canadian shipping industry with government participation and financial support.

The 28,000-ton bulk carrier, to cost \$39 million, is scheduled to enter service in 1978 and is designed to operate in the high Arctic where two lead-zinc mines are in different stages of development.

The ship will also serve as a prototype for larger vessels expected to be

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needed for the movement of gas and oil out of the Arctic to southern Canada to meet future energy needs. It will also be used to determine more accurately the ice navigation regulations promulgated under the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act.

A number of maritime nations own merchant ships described as being reinforced for navigation in ice but such ships are not classed as full icebreakers in their own right.

The first *Arctic*, originally the German ship *Gauss*, was built in 1902 to participate in an international Antarctic expedition. She was a wooden steamship equipped with masts and spars for square-rigged sails.

The Canadian Government bought her in 1904, renamed her and appointed Captain Joseph-Elzéar Bernier to command her in a series of Arctic voyages from 1904 to 1925.

Career of the first "Arctic"

The Canadian Government Ship *Arctic* had an unusually interesting career. It recalls the epic periods of polar exploration and the first firm steps towards Canadian sovereignty in the North.

The *Arctic* (ex *Gauss*) was built for a German Antarctic expedition which was intended to be part of an international effort. Named for Karl Freidrich Gauss the famous scientist, the *Gauss* was an immensely strong wooden steamship with sails, especially designed for magnetic and meteorological research, and was completed by Howaldtswerke of Kiel in 1902.

Captain Bernier

The Canadian Government purchased the *Gauss* in 1904, changing the name to *Arctic*. If Canada was fortunate in acquiring the ship, this good luck was doubled in the officer appointed to command. He was Joseph-Elzéar Bernier (1852-1934) who was sent to Germany to take over the ship. Captain Bernier, who was born at l'Islet on the South Shore of the St. Lawrence, first went to sea as a boy in his father's sailing ships, becoming master of one at the age of 17. He is reputed to have sailed from Quebec in a new vessel, crossed the Atlantic and sold her in Liverpool, and returned home by the mail steamer within a month. Bernier was fascinated by Arctic exploration and the drama of the Franklin searches.

By 1887, when he took a shore job as dockmaster of the Lorne graving dock at Lauzon, he was planning an expedition of his own. By 1900 he was lecturing widely to gain support for an expedition to the North Pole by way of the Bering Sea.

Success in 1909

Bernier's three principal expeditions in the *Arctic* took place before the 1914 War interrupted the Canadian northern effort. In his 1906-7 trip Bernier pushed the *Arctic* as far west as Melville Island, making many landings and taking formal possession. On the second expedition, in 1908-9, favourable ice conditions enabled the *Arctic* to reach halfway through McLure Strait and Bernier was convinced that he could have forced the Northwest Passage had his orders permitted. Regretfully, he turned back but notable sledge journeys by Morin and Green enabled the Canadian Ensign to be hoisted on Banks Island. The climax to this voyage, and to Bernier's life, came on Dominion Day 1909 when he established a bronze plate on Parry's Rock at Winter Harbour which proclaims for Canada "...all islands and territory within the degrees of 141 and 60 West longitude as Canadian territory, now under Canadian jurisdiction". That plate stands today. Sailing orders for his third voyage, 1910-11, had the declared objective of the Northwest Passage at Bernier's discretion. But this time ice frustrated his efforts and it was not to be. Regretfully, Bernier turned back. He was a realist and looked forward to the day when icebreakers of more power would succeed where he failed.

There remained a period of twilight before modern technology transformed the North. Bernier resumed the Eastern Arctic patrol in the CGS *Arctic* in 1922 but neglect during the First World War had taken its toll of the ship, and the captain was growing old. From then until 1925 Bernier made annual voyages in the summer. By this time the *Arctic* was virtually an under-powered wooden barge with cut-down rig. By 1926 her days were over and the ship was left to rot on a mudbank at Lévis, Quebec.

Bernier has a secure place in Canadian history. His name is commemorated in the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker *J.E. Bernier*.