

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have no doubt Stefansson brought before the government the seriousness of the plight these men would be in.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Rather the contrary. He always maintained there would be no doubt about them being able to maintain themselves, that they could live upon the country, which I thought at the time was strange. But that was his contention to me personally. I am now speaking of his personal representations to me. Of course, he pressed very strongly that the Canadian government should lay claim to the island. He repeatedly urged consideration of that matter upon us, but I always felt the island was away out of the reach of Canadian territory, but that if it were to be available as an air base, and the British authorities thought so, the best thing for him to do was to take the matter up with them. I must say that until the return of the second expedition he maintained stoutly that there was no doubt about these young men being able to maintain themselves.

Mr. MANION: I am sorry I was not in and did not hear the minister read the whole of the statement. Did he give the facts as to the quantity of supplies, food and so forth, this expedition had with them, and for what length of time?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No.

Mr. MANION: The minister does not know what these supplies were?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We were in no way responsible for the expedition. It was organized apparently in Seattle. The only Canadian in the party was young Crawford, and the supplies, as a matter of fact the whole expedition, was organized without consultation with the Canadian government at all, and without any contribution from us. We had nothing to do with it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Was the relief expedition of 1922 financed privately outside of this government's help?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Oh yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the minister know where the funds came from? Did the United States government supply the funds?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I do not think they did, but I would not like to make that statement definitely. I think it was largely private funds. I remember Stefansson telling me that the money he had raised to put into this enterprise was from friends and acquaintances, and he said what a terrific financial loss it was going to be to him.

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: You mean to his friends and acquaintances.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I simply repeat the statement he made to me. I have no knowledge as to who sustained the loss.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He may have put up the money himself, and if so it would be his own loss. But to the extent that a lot of his friends and acquaintances put up money it would not be his loss. Were the government aware of the failure of the expedition in September, 1922, and if not when did they become aware of it?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The first relief expedition?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The first relief expedition, yes.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I do not know that I can answer that question. I do not think that we had any official on the vessel, although I would not like to make a definite statement to that effect. The next summer was the time when he approached us for assistance to send the second relief expedition.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The boat that went up in 1921 was a Canadian boat carrying the British flag?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Well, there is not any doubt that he intended to raise the British flag on the island, at least that was the—

Mr. MEIGHEN: It was a Canadian expedition, it was not American even if all but one of the men on it were Americans?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I have not the slightest doubt, Stefansson went with the firm purpose of taking possession of the island for the British government. That was his statement.

Mr. HOEY: Did the British government contribute to the first expedition?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Did Stefansson approach the government for assistance for the second expedition?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): In 1922?

Mr. MEIGHEN: In 1923 that was?

Mr. HOEY: In 1920.

Mr. MEIGHEN: According to the minister's statement it was in 1923.