

resided there for about a year after his birth, he is, nevertheless, a British subject by birth. Mr. Stefansson's education was received in the common school, high school, leading to a university B. A. degree at the State University of Iowa. Following this he took three years of post graduate study at Harvard University, held a scholarship and two fellowships there, following which he became an instructor, as he puts it, "in a minor capacity." Proceeding with his story he says in part:—

It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that during the period of my formal and informal education I absorbed the same general type of misinformation as does the average American. When I went North and became an explorer I found that nine out of ten of my ideas about the polar regions were wrong.

For many years it has been a large part of my activities to say in lectures and writings and conversation that the Far North, both in the western and eastern hemispheres, is destined to be colonized in the same general way as were the Western prairies of this continent, by the same type of people, and with a resulting civilization not fundamentally dissimilar. This assertion is met in the minds of readers or listeners by small armies of objections. The things you think you know about the North arise in a body to declare that the contention is absurd. With the initial advantage of knowing what the reader or listener thinks he knows about the North (for I knew those things myself once and believed them until I went North and found they were not true), I proceed as follows to demolish his misknowledge.

Temperature at North Pole

Nearly if not quite the most fundamental wrong idea about the North is that the North Pole is the coldest place in the northern hemisphere, and that the polar regions are far colder in the coldest part of Winter than any countries that are now inhabited by the average civilized European or American. When we stop to think about it, we see we have really always known that this could not be true—as will appear below.

Besides minor considerations, there are three main factors that determine what the possible minimum temperature of any place may be. These are, latitude, altitude, and distance from the ocean. We see at once that the North Pole has in a high degree only one of these three qualifications for being extremely

cold. Certainly it is at a high latitude. But the North Pole does not lie high above sea level, for it is located in an ocean which Admiral Peary, at the time he visited the Pole, found to be more than twelve thousand feet deep. And if it is not above sea level neither is it far away from the ocean, for it lies in the ocean. Possessing only one of the three main qualifications for being extremely cold, it naturally is never extremely cold. Those who theorize about it generally agree that the minimum temperature there seldom if ever, drops below sixty below zero, Fahrenheit. However, that is a matter of theory. No one has as yet spent an entire year at the North Pole. It need not be more than a year or two, and in my opinion it will not be more than a decade or two, until somebody goes to the North Pole, stays there a year, and brings back to us a coherent account of how cold or warm it is there from day to day for the twelve months.

If the actual minimum temperature in the North Pole is a matter of theory, we are in no doubt about the temperatures of the north coast of Canada or Alaska. For more than twenty years in the case of Canada and about forty in the case of the United States there have been weather bureau observation stations on the north coast of North America. I have spent in the polar regions ten winters and thirteen summers myself and during most of that time I have carried reliable thermometers, so that I could say from my own experience how cold it is up there in winter and how warm in summer, but I prefer to quote the records of the Canadian and American weather bureaus. I have written both of them and asked them to give me the lowest temperature ever recorded in the Canadian station at Herschel Island on the north coast of Canada near the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and the American station near Point Barrow, at the north tip of Alaska, about 250 miles north of the arctic circle. The replies in both cases were identical: "We have never recorded anything lower than 54°F. below zero."

Recently I was reading over a report of the meteorological observations of my arctic expedition of 1913-18, made by the second-in-command, Dr. A. M. Anderson. He says, "The lowest temperature of the winter (1915-16) was 46° below zero," or about like Saranac Lake, New York State, which is a winter resort. Temperatures as low as 50° below zero are rare on the north coast of North

America and there are many winters when 45° or 46° below is the lowest record.

Summer in the Arctic

A complement of the idea that the North is dreadfully cold in winter is the notion that it is also cold through the entire summer. It is possible to maintain that the winters are dreadfully cold, but only by agreeing that the winters of northern Vermont and Saranac Lake and Minnesota and Montana are also dreadfully cold. But no one can even glance at the Weather Bureau records for summer temperatures in polar regions and maintain that in any sense of the English language the summers there are "always cold." Climate may be classified in various ways. One of them is to make a division between continental and insular climates. The ocean is a great stabilizing influence. In the tropics it acts generally as a refrigerator and in the polar regions as a radiator. Even the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico are colder than the surface of the land in Texas in summer, and accordingly the sea breezes keep Galveston and Corpus Christi reasonably cool. I was told at Fort Bragg, on the west coast of California, last summer, that since the town was built the temperature there has never risen above 85° in the shade, for the ocean breezes are continually blowing across it. But fifty miles inland, beyond a range of mountains they frequently have a temperature of 110° in the shade. Remembering that this is true of Texas and California, we are prepared to hear that the coastlines of the polar regions are never warm in summer.

Length of the Seasons

After considering the minimum temperatures of winter and the maximum temperatures of summer, we come next to a consideration of the length of the seasons. It is true, generally speaking, that the farther north you go in the northern hemisphere the longer the winter and the shorter the summer. However, this has far less of a "practical" meaning than is commonly supposed. A Sicilian may think that a winter of three months' length is intolerable and if he insists that it is intolerable you can't very well argue with him, but you can at least prove to him that numerous prosperous people live in a climate where there are three months of winter. There are those who are used to three months of winter who