

venue cutter Bear, and as that ship was on the way to rescue the survivors, and having better accommodation, they were transferred.

Mr. Stefansson, in the belief that Wrangel island occupied a strategic position for an Arctic air base, wished to take possession of it on behalf of the British crown. With that object in view he formed the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company. He also intended to hunt and trap and later applied, unsuccessfully, to the department for a lease or license for that purpose.

In 1921, under private financing Stefansson sent a party to occupy Wrangel island.

Mr. MEIGHEN: When was the Stefansson Company formed?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): In 1921, according to my notes. It says "In 1921, under private financing, Stefansson sent a party to occupy Wrangel island."

Mr. MEIGHEN: Just before that the minister referred to some company of his.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): This is a continuation of the same company, the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The first company that organized the expedition was in 1921.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): That is the record. It continues:

Mr. Allan R. Crawford, a Canadian of Toronto was the leader, the other members being E. Lorne Knight, W. F. Maurer, Milton Gale—all United States citizens—and an Eskimo seamstress, Ada Blackjack. The government took no part in this expedition and were in no way responsible for the hoisting of the flag over Wrangel island. Nor did the government give Stefansson any encouragement to do so.

Mr. MEIGHEN: When did the expedition leave?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): In 1921.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What time of the year?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): In August. I am also informed that:

Crawford was induced to lead the expedition believing that Great Britain had the best claim to the island. He knew nothing of Russia's claim until he reached East cape on the Siberian coast.

In 1922, Stefansson organized a relief party, under Captain Joseph Bernard, and applied to this department for a contribution. The government duly considered the matter and P.C. 1735, of the 21st August, 1922, authorized the advance to Stefansson of the sum of \$3,000 "to assist in providing for the relief of these four men who were left on Wrangel island." The steamer Teddy Bear left Nome on the 22nd August, 1922. It proceeded to the Siberian coast in the vicinity of East cape but, on account of ice, was unable to reach Wrangel island. The boat was obliged to return without establishing communication.

Mr. MEIGHEN: When did it leave, and when did it arrive on the Siberian coast?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I have given the dates.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I did not get them.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The memorandum reads:

P.C. 1735, of the 21st August, 1922, authorized the advance to Stefansson of the sum of \$3,000.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is when the government authorized it. When did they leave?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): They left on the 22nd of August, 1922.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And returned when?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): They went to the vicinity of East Cape, but on account of ice were unable to reach Wrangel island.

Mr. MEIGHEN: When did they return?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The following month, I am informed.

The memorandum continues:

The following year, 1923, another relief expedition was sent out but to this one the department did not contribute. It was headed by Harold Noice, on the steamer Donaldson. It was successful in reaching Wrangel island and what it found is now well known—Ada Blackjack was the only survivor.

In 1924, while the government did not intend to set up any claim to Wrangel island, they assisted Mr. Stefansson to place his representations before the Imperial government, by advancing to him the sum of \$700 to defray his travelling expenses—P.C. 714 of the 21st August, 1923. It appears the Imperial government were not disposed to lay claim to the island but, before reaching a decision, submitted the matter to this government. P.C. 1227 of the 17th July, 1924, sets out clearly our position. It says "The view taken by the Imperial authorities as to the undesirability of laying claim to Wrangel island is shared by the government of Canada."

The tragic end of the 1921 expedition is most regrettable. Beyond doubt Crawford, the leader, was prompted by patriotic motives and died in the belief that he perished for the empire. The expedition was, however, carried out under the responsibility of Mr. Stefansson and the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, and this government was not in any way connected with it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not quite understand one feature of the story. The object of the expedition of 1922 was to try to rescue the party?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes, a relief expedition.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, and I think the contribution to it was entirely justified. Did the government in any way supervise the character of the vessel, or have anything to do with selecting the personnel with a view to making sure the expedition would arrive at Wrangel island?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No, I am told, we did not. That was just a straight contribution to the relief expedition organized by Stefansson himself for the relief of these men.