

retirement. The Bache post was closed in 1933, as was another of the high Arctic RCMP posts, Dundas Harbour.

Northern matters were now handled primarily by Roy Gibson (fig. 24), the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Interior and Deputy Commissioner of the NWT. In 1931 W.W. Cory had been replaced as Commissioner by the new Deputy Minister of the Interior, Hugh Rowatt. Rowatt was nearly 70 at the time of his appointment and apparently had little interest in the North; his successor, James Wardle, had still less interest. Between 1931 and 1936 northern administration was placed under the Dominion Lands Board, of which H.E. Hume was Chairman until 1933, when he retired and was replaced by J. Lorne Turner. Unlike Finnie, neither Hume nor Turner was a member of the NWTC, and unlike Cory and Rowatt, Wardle was never appointed NWT Commissioner. Major decisions were therefore made by Gibson, who served as Acting Commissioner after Rowatt's retirement in April 1934 and during Wardle's tenure as Deputy Minister (August 1935 to December 1936). At the end of 1936 the Department of the Interior was amalgamated with the Department of Mines to form the Department of Mines and Resources. The new Deputy Minister and Commissioner, Charles Camsell, was born in the North and had considerable experience doing geological fieldwork there. However, he too seems to have left most of the decisions to Gibson.

Gibson thus ought to be a major figure in the history of Canada's North, yet he remains something of an enigma. Before 1931, he was often peripherally involved in Arctic sovereignty decisions, but a study of his letters and memos from the 1920s yields no evidence of any strong views on or deep involvement in Arctic issues. Gibson was undoubtedly an efficient administrator, who carried out directives to keep expenses down with ruthless thoroughness. As a result, his subordinates later described him as dictatorial and lacking in vision.³⁷ Yet the documents from the 1930s printed here do convey some sense of Gibson's concerns and aims once the North became his responsibility (see especially doc. 544). He did not ignore sovereignty questions, and indeed frequently pushed to have a definitive report on the matter drawn up by the Department of External Affairs. Gibson wanted Skelton on the NWTC, and Skelton was in fact appointed in 1938, but the busy Under-Secretary attended only sporadically.

In the absence of any adequate response from External Affairs, Gibson turned to T.L. Cory, a solicitor in the Department of Mines and Resources. From the legal point of view, Cory's report (doc. 541) was seriously lacking, since it showed no awareness of the recent (1933) decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) in the Eastern Greenland case.³⁸ This influential decision validated White's argument that the usual standard of effective occupation must be modified

³⁷ See the comments quoted in Shelagh D. Grant, *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), p. 27.

³⁸ Permanent Court of International Justice, series A/B, Judgments, Orders and Advisory Opinions, fascicule no. 53, *Legal Status of Eastern Greenland*, judgment of April 5th, 1933.