

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA

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F O R E W O R D

When the Northmen or Vikings in their restless search for adventure, plunder and new homes, ravaged the coasts of Germany, France and the British Isles in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, their names were synonymous with intrepidity of spirit, lightning-like rapidity of action, absolute disregard for life and deathless adherence to their plighted word. These Nordics practically disappeared from the history of Europe after the close of the eleventh century. Some of their descendants, the residents of a remote and barren island in the North Atlantic came, during the latter part of the nineteenth century into the history of Canada and the U.S.A. No longer were they sailing in their Dragon Ships, searching for plunder at the point of the sword: that fierce spirit had passed. These newcomers appeared as humble immigrants, who had wearied of the difficult task of eking out a bare existence in their native Iceland and having heard tales of the bounteous plenty of the new land had, like their forebears, ventured forth on unknown seas to see what fortune held in store for them in America. The old courage and fearlessness, the old spirit of adventure and love of freedom was still present, but these qualities, which made their forefathers successful marauders have made these newcomers successful citizens of the two rich, great and free nations, where they have made their homes.

The story of the Icelandic settlements in America is the story of how the representatives of the smallest of the Scandinavian family of Nations, with no previous training in

colonization came into competition with the best, hardiest and most successful colonizers in the world -- the British -- and achieved a noteworthy measure of success.

The purpose of the following introduction and documents is to make accessible to those who being interested in the story of the Icelanders in America, but who cannot read Icelandic, a body of information on that subject.

More than half a century has now passed since this movement first began, and it is perhaps not too early to attempt to show that the Icelanders, though few in number in comparison with other nationalities, have proved to be a valuable addition to the population of the countries(U.S.A. and Canada)in which they made their homes.

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CHAPTER I. CAUSES FOR EMIGRATION

CLIMATIC:

The capriciousness of the Icelandic climate, with its attendant hardships has undoubtedly played an important part in influencing many Icelanders to migrate to America. At various times the Island has experienced unusually heavy falls of snow, making communication by land impossible. The Northern coasts were (it is estimated) over a period of years, icebound four years out of every five. The numerous volcanoes have, at irregular intervals belched forth fire and ashes, which caused widespread destruction.

The total area of the Island is 40,426 square miles, but the inhabitable portion is limited to the valleys and lowlands fringing the coast.⁽¹⁾ On the East, South and West the climate is mild and pleasant, due to the influence of the Gulf Stream. The climate in Northern Iceland is generally raw and cold. Great ice floes are often carried to this part of the Island by the cold Polar current, which flows in a South-westerly direction towards the coast of Greenland. At certain seasons of the year cold and foggy weather prevails there, caused by the ice drifts piled close against the coast.

The winter of 1858-59 was the worst which the Northern part of Iceland had experienced during the whole century. The hardships which attended this period of bad weather aroused in many people the idea of emigrating.⁽²⁾ In 1875 Dyngjufjalla Volcano, in the Eastern part of Iceland erupted, and a heavy fall of ashes laid waste the land far and wide. This misfortune accelerated the movement to America, which had already begun.⁽³⁾

Adverse climatic conditions, which rendered ordinary grain farming unprofitable have thus, especially when comparisons were made with conditions in America, engendered in many Icelanders the desire to emigrate from a thankless Motherland.

POLITICAL:

The third quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of great political unrest in Iceland. The Home Rule Party, under the great Icelandic leader Jon Sigurdsson, was unceasing in its demands for a Free Parliament for Iceland. Some there were who even voiced the sentiment that the Icelanders should all leave Iceland if their request was not granted. This suggestion was doubtless only a political move, for there is no reason to suspect that many seriously entertained it. Nevertheless, while the fight for political reform was going on it is possible that some people may have become impatient and decided to emigrate.

In 1874 Christian IX of Denmark, granted the request of the Icelandic Althing for a Constitution.⁽⁴⁾ This Constitution granted legislative power to the Althing and established a measure of self-government in Iceland. Many now felt that a new era of prosperity for the Island would immediately result, but this naturally did not prove to be the case.

In spite of the bitterness of the political struggle it seems to have had practically no effect on emigration. Those who left the country did so from economic, rather than political reasons, as many of the emigrants were poor people from impoverished districts where suffering was general.⁽⁵⁾

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC:

The French Revolution gave rise in Germany to the new intellectual movement known as Romanticism, which brought about a complete literary revolution and created a new national life. A strong feeling of patriotic sentiment demanding freedom from the prevalent foreign intellectual influence on the one hand, and from foreign political dominion on the other arose. From Germany this movement spread to the North and won the enthusiastic support of the younger writers in Denmark. From there it was carried to Iceland by Bjarni Thorarensen (1786-1841) and Jonas Hallgrímsson (1807-45), two of Iceland's greatest modern poets. (6) Thorarensen in 1805 wrote the song "Eldgamla Isafeld", which was the Icelandic National Anthem down to 1874. He was an ardent Nationalist, and sought to awaken in the people a feeling of national consciousness.

Other scholars and writers followed in their wake, and a literary movement which gradually broadened into a great national, patriotic movement, political as well as literary, resulted. This movement was still further strengthened by the July Revolution in France (1830). (7) In 1835 the periodical Fjölur was founded and became the organ of the movement.

After the Franco-Prussian War the realistic movement which spread over Europe made itself felt in Iceland through Icelandic students, who had come under the influence of Georg Brandes. Social and political problems were subjected to a searing scrutiny. This movement, critical and negative as it frequently was, contained no message of hope. The realists in their efforts to picture conditions in their naked reality pointed to the seamy side of life; to the poverty and discouraging economic conditions.

This intellectual awakening in Iceland opened the eyes of the people to their actual condition, and is perhaps the major reason for so many people emigrating to America. Many began to despair of economic advancement in Iceland. Some there were who decided to leave because of their children, who, they felt had little chance of achieving material success in Iceland. Then the spirit of adventure must not be overlooked. When the first settlers had gone to America their letters influenced a great many others to follow in their footsteps.

In conclusion it may be said that religion was not a cause for emigration, since the Lutheran Church, which is the state church of Iceland, has always, in recent times been liberal in its attitude. There have been no recent religious persecutions in Iceland.

CHAPTER II. EARLY SETTLEMENTSUTAH:

The first Icelanders to emigrate went to far away Utah in 1855. (8) Two Icelanders living in Copenhagen were converted by Mormon missionaries and they induced a few relatives and friends to emigrate to Utah. These people founded a small community near Spanish Forks. Religion accordingly, was the sole motive for this first Icelandic migration to America.

At present the number of Icelanders in this settlement is very small. The second generation speaks some Icelandic, but the third generation practically none. In the near future this colony will doubtless disappear entirely as a racial group unless its numbers are augmented by new arrivals from Iceland, a possibility which is very remote.

BRAZIL:

On February 4th, 1860, a letter was circulated in Thingeyjar and Eyjafjardarsysla asking for the signatures of those who would be willing to migrate to Brazil. (9) The response received was not very encouraging and the matter was dropped.

In 1863 four men went to Brazil to select a site for settlement. (10) They made their way to the settlement of Dana Francisca. The following year Jonas Hallgrímsson, one of the party, wrote a letter home describing conditions in Brazil. This letter was published in the newspaper *Werdanfara* (1864-65). (11) As a result there was considerable talk of emigration to Brazil, but very few people left.

In 1873 a report was circulated that free passage to that place could be obtained,⁽¹²⁾ but by that time Brazil had lost its appeal. The migration idea was then steadily gaining ground, and although a few desired to go to Brazil the majority preferred Canada and the U.S.A.

WASHINGTON ISLAND, U.S.A.:

Icelandic emigration proper dates from 1870, when a small community was organized on Washington Island, at the Northwestern end of Lake Michigan.⁽¹³⁾ The first party came out at the instigation of a Dane, named William Wickman, who had been employed as a clerk in a store in Iceland for about ten years previous to his moving to Milwaukee, Wis. in the year 1865.⁽¹⁴⁾

The Island, at the time of the arrival of the first Icelanders was, and for some time continued to be, the abode of fishermen, who made no improvements and were really only interested in the fishing industry. In the spring most of them went away to other parts to look for work.

The newcomers took up land and immediately set about building homes and clearing land. Lake Michigan, which abounded in fish, afforded them remunerative employment in the winter and food at all times. The following extract from a letter dated Washington Island, March 8th, 1872, gives an idea of conditions.⁽¹⁵⁾

"I have been four days out on the ice fishing and have caught fifty fish so far, and have sold them for nearly seven dollars; people come here to buy fish and take it to nearby places; it sells for four cents per pound. There are many fishermen here from the communities around; they live in small cabins during the fishing season and leave when the ice shows signs of breaking up. When no one comes to buy fish for several days they pile up their fish side by side; no one ever loses a single

fish by theft. Some days one catches thirty fish, other days none."

In another letter of the same date, published in Nordanfara, the condition of an indigent Icelander, Johannes by name, who left Iceland during the spring of 1871 with his wife and family and settled on Washington Island, is described thus: (16)

"He came to us and began to try to fell trees; at first he found this work difficult, but when he had worked with us for a while he soon acquired the knack; his wife paid for her keep and that of her child by working in the house; then we secured him a place with a widower, who lives alone, and he can remain in this house during the summer if he so desires for little rent, because the man goes away in the summer to secure work. Johannes is to sow in this man's field, which is small, and that work his wife can do, and he can sow and grub for others for high wages all spring. During this winter he has cut cord wood for \$1.00 or \$1.50 per day, while his expenses have not amounted to more than 30¢ a day. He says that he is unaccustomed to living on pancakes, syrup, pork and beans, fried pork and potatoes as well as wheat bread and from twelve to fourteen cups of coffee each day, because here in America it is customary to fill the cup each time it becomes empty during the course of a meal, and those who have a tendency to be thirsty can drink a goodly number of cups of fragrant coffee. Some have five meals a day."

The letter says that the above fare is regarded as the very poorest, and we can well imagine the effect that it had on those who had felt the pressure of want in Iceland. No

doubt the writer wished to encourage emigration, and it might be justly inferred that he rather overstated than underestimated the actual conditions.

Numerous letters from Washington Island were published in Nordanfara and caused a great deal of interest in migration to America.

On June 13th, 1872, Pall and Harold Thorlaksson, together with thirteen others set sail from Eyrarbakka for Milwaukee, Wis. (17) The following extract is taken from a letter written by one of the party, Jon Halldorsson, and is dated at Milwaukee, on September 8th, 1872. (18)

"During this month our wages are the lowest which are paid here, and in spite of this we ought to have as much profit at the end of the month as farm hands have in Iceland at the end of the year, yet the work here would be thought light in Iceland. I do not even compare the food here and that at home, for I cannot imagine that even the upper class at home enjoys any as good..... I am never lonesome and have plenty to do in my spare time. Working ten hours a day does not seem too much to one who has worked sixteen hours a day at home. Young unmarried men, who have no family ties, or young married ones with one child would be better off if they came here instead of starting up housekeeping at home."

Later on in his letter he advises carpenters to bring their tools with them, since they can then command journeymen's wages.

Pall Thorlaksson, while a student at Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, wrote the following, on January 27th,

1873: (19)

"No one lives here in idleness; if there be any who entertain this notion they should draw back from emigrating as they would from a hot fire..... Perhaps the best plan for Icelanders is not to start into business for themselves at once, but to learn first, by working for others, the operations most necessary to progress in this country..... It does not seem unlikely that if we Icelanders form a settlement here we may in time increase in numbers, wealth and reputation..... Many will say that this movement will result in the Icelanders losing their language and nationality and disappearing entirely. One can think this, but this need not necessarily happen..... I hope that the Icelanders who come here will be able to preserve their language through having their own papers, teachers and ministers like the Norwegians, and besides this, keep in touch with the Motherland, through Icelandic newspapers, thus also Icelandic authors may find a broader field for their endeavors."

The letters which have been quoted are merely extracts from a few of the numberless ones which the early arrivals from Iceland wrote back to their friends and relatives. These letters, no doubt, had the result of inducing many people in Iceland to emigrate to America.

The Washington Island settlement did not thrive, but it paved the way for others. At the present time there are still a few families of Icelanders on the Island.

MUSKOKA, ONTARIO:

On August 4th, 1873, 153 persons set out from Akureyri on the steamship Queen for Ontario, Canada. (20) The ship docked at Granton, Scotland, August 10th. From there the party took the train to Glasgow and embarked on the Allan Line ship Manitoban on August 12th, arriving at Quebec August 25th. From there they entrained for Ontario and reached Toronto August 27. During the last lap of the journey part of the group destined for Milwaukee, left the main body of immigrants.

After a stay of two days in Toronto the immigrants went to the little town of Rosseau in the district of Muskoka, being influenced by a report that there was plenty of government land and work there. Work proved scarce, and the first land inspected, fifteen miles North of Rosseau, proved unsatisfactory. Latter better land, six miles East of Rosseau was located, and it was decided to found a settlement there, provided the government agreed to construct a road through it the following summer. This promise was received and many filed on homesteads and obtained work on the road. Only two men who had means enough to buy land moved to their farms that winter. Of the remainder, some secured employment in Rosseau or drifted farther afield in search of employment.

In the fall of 1875 Sigtryggur Jonasson came to Muskoka and promised all the Icelanders there free passage to Gimli with the Kinmount party. (21) As a result all the Icelanders in Muskoka except those who had settled on farms and did not wish

to leave unless they received something for their work, moved to Manitoba. At the present time there are a few of the original Icelandic settlers and their families still in the Muskoka District. A Post Office called Hekkla was established in this settlement, and still exists.

KINMOUNT & NOVA SCOTIA:

September 23rd, 1874, the steamer St. Patrick brought 365 Icelandic immigrants directly to Quebec.⁽²²⁾ At the entrance to the harbour a Dominion Government immigration agent, accompanied by Johannes Arngrimsson, a young Icelander, who had come to America in 1872, met them and sought to persuade them to settle in Canada, but the majority of the immigrants said they intended to settle in the United States.

The immigrants held a meeting on shipboard, which was presided over by Brynjolfur Brynjolfsson, who acted as spokesman for the party. A list of the conditions under which these Icelanders would agree to settle in Canada was drawn up and presented to the government representative; these terms are as follows:⁽²³⁾ They were to enjoy full liberty and rights of citizenship at once and on the same terms as native born citizens. A sufficiently large and suitable tract of land for a colony was to be granted them. They were to preserve unhindered their personal rights, their language and their nationality for themselves and for their descendants forever.

The immigrants believed that they would enjoy these rights in the U.S.A., which was a Republic, but not in Canada, which

was under a Monarchical form of government similar to the one that they had just left. The government assented to these terms in the person of the agent, and a written agreement to that effect was entered into. Thereupon the group went intact to Kinmount, Ontario. ##

There is no doubt that this agreement was largely responsible for turning the tide of Icelandic immigration from the U.S.A. to Canada.

At Kinmount the party lived till winter in log cabins provided by the Ontario government. (24) During the winter all the men obtained railway construction work, which did not last long. Dissatisfaction with the place and prospects was general. In the spring, through the efforts of Johannes Arngrimsson, eighty of the party moved to Nova Scotia and settled on the Mooseland Heights (Mesquedoboit). (25)

Dr. Rogvaldur Petursson says that his authority for the above mentioned meeting and agreement comes from Brynjolfur Brynjolfsson, and several others who were present at the meeting. As a matter of fact one of this party, Jon Hillman, is still living and resides in Mountain, N. Dakota. Whether the government ever formally assented to these terms will come to light when the Dominion Archives are searched.

According to the custom in Iceland every home in the settlement was named. Shortly after the arrival of the settlers in the district a meeting was called for the purpose of selecting a name for the community, which would distinguish it from all other communities as distinctly Icelandic. The name selected was Markland, and the choice was supported by the following passage from the Saga of Eric the Red:

"That land where they went was level, and covered with timber, and white, sandy beaches were general and sloping seaward. Then Leifur said, 'land shall be named after its nature, and called Markland'."

The number of these settlers was slowly augmented by new arrivals from Iceland, and in time numbered more than two hundred, if those who settled at Lockport nearby are counted.

The land was hilly, stony and heavily forested, and although the settlers worked hard little progress was made. In 1881 the whole group, with the exception of a few who waited till the following spring moved to N. Dakota, Manitoba and Minnesota. (26)

It seems a shame that out of all the splendid land which was available in Nova Scotia the Icelanders should have been directed to such worthless tracts. The government, not knowing that the land had been misrepresented by its agents, nevertheless, acted in good faith. This spirit was clearly demonstrated when the government gave the Icelanders title deeds to their farms even when it was known that they intended to move away.

The settlers had no minister, but ministers from the

neighboring German settlement of Lunenberg visited the colony frequently and formed a congregation, preached in English, christened children, confirmed young people and performed marriage ceremonies. (27)

Brynjolfur Brynjolfsson was the leader in the settlement in all things pertaining to religious and educational work. He was a gifted man and worked with untiring zeal to promote the welfare of his people. (28) In the early years of the settlement he sent one of his sons, Björn Stefan to Thiel College, Greenville, Penn., to prepare for the ministry. This son, after having moved to N. Dakota with the family became Mayor of the City of Grand Forks, N. Dakota, and in 1904 was Chairman of the Democratic State Convention, which selected delegates, of which he was one, to the National Presidential Convention at St. Louis, Mo. Another of his sons, Skapti Brynjolfur, had the distinction of being the first Icelander elected to the State Senate of North Dakota, a year after the territory had been admitted to the Union. Magnus, the youngest son, was the first Icelander to qualify as an attorney-at-law in the United States, and was elected as States Attorney for Pembina County, N. Dakota for twelve years from 1898 to 1910, the year of his death.

MINNESOTA:

In 1874 there was a large number of Icelanders in the city of Milwaukee, Wis. Since 1874 was the thousandth anniversary of the settlement of Iceland the Icelanders in Milwaukee determined to celebrate this event. (29) Speeches were made by the

Rev. Jon Bjarnason, the editor, Jon Olafsson, and others. At this time an Icelandic Society "Islendingafelag" was formed for the purpose of promoting intellectual interest among the Icelanders in America. (30)

A movement was also set on foot to find a suitable place for an Icelandic colony, where the immigrants might dwell together. As Wisconsin did not seem to offer the desired opportunity committees were appointed to investigate where a suitable location might be found. Sigfus Magnussen and Jon Halldorsson were sent to Nebraska. As a result of this visit a few Icelanders settled in that state, but it was not selected as a site for the new colony. Another committee, led by Olafur Olafsson and Jon Olafsson was sent to Alaska. About their expedition Jon Olafsson later published a book ("Alaska Lysing a landi og landkostum, etc.", Washington, D.C., 1875.), probably the first Icelandic book published in America. (31) They decided that Alaska was not a suitable place for a colony. Large numbers of these people later went to Minnesota and Gimli, Man.

Most of the pioneers in the Minnesota settlement had come to America in 1873 or 1874 and had "hired out" with farmers in Iowa and Wisconsin. The first settlers were Gunnlaugur Petursson and his wife, who set out from Iowa County, Wis., to find a suitable homestead in the West. (32) In a wagon drawn by a team of oxen he covered a distance of five hundred miles in three weeks until he came to a halt on the banks of the Yellow

Medicine River near the present town of Minneota. There, on July 4th, 1875, he pitched his tent and decided to settle. At present, it is estimated that there are 1,200 to 1,500 people of Icelandic extraction in the Minneota community. The colonists were fortunate in their choice of a locality; the rich soil has yielded excellent returns in wheat and other kinds of grain.

Since the early pioneers in Minneota were too poor to buy lumber for their homes, and as there were no trees available for erecting log cabins, they were obliged to live in cellars dug deep into the ground and crudely thatched.

Since that time trees have been planted extensively, and they serve the double purpose of beautifying the farms and providing shelter.

As soon as the settlers had increased sufficiently in number societies were formed to promote education and high principles. Later churches were organized.

CHAPTER III. SETTLEMENTS IN MANITOBA & DAKOTANEW ICELAND. THE FIRST PERMANENT CANADIAN SETTLEMENT:

The Icelanders who wintered at Kinmount(1874-75) had not been there long when dissatisfaction with that place began to manifest itself. (33) They realized the precariousness of depending for a livelihood on day labor, and knew that it would be impossible to form an all Icelandic settlement in Ontario, since there was not a suitably large stretch of unsettled land available, and the Icelanders have always been rural dwellers. At this juncture a singularly large-hearted man, John Taylor by name, took an interest in them. He sympathized with them, for the majority could not speak English and were practically destitute, and determined to interest himself in their affairs and render what help he could. He spoke of their case to Lord Dufferin, who was at that time Governor-General of Canada. Dufferin had in his youth visited Iceland(1856) and had conceived a high opinion of the Icelanders.

Through John Taylor's intercession and Dufferin's interest the government agreed to render the immigrants financial aid to locate and establish a separate, closed reserve where a colony of their own could be formed in the West. A party of six, headed by Taylor, was chosen and travelled to Manitoba to seek a site for the proposed settlement. (34) This delegation arrived at Winnipeg July 16th, 1875. (35)

Just prior to their arrival Manitoba had suffered greatly from a Grasshopper Plague, which had destroyed almost all the agriculture in the province. The outlook there was not pleasant,

and the barren and treeless plains did not strike the delegation as a good place for the Icelanders to settle. Again, since the immigrants were too poor to buy implements, horses and oxen, it was not deemed wise to depend on cultivation of the soil at first, but rather to choose a locality where there was some fishing to help out. The land along the West shore of Lake Winnipeg was viewed and was recommended by the delegation in its report for the following reasons: (36)

- (1) Absence of grasshoppers hitherto, and improbability of their ever coming there.
- (2) Good and easy access to the very spot -- railway and steamboat every step of the journey from Quebec.
- (3) Excellent and abundant fishing.
- (4) Extensive hay marshes scattered everywhere throughout the entire region.
- (5) Superior quality of the land. Deep, black soil, resting on white clay.
- (6) Abundance of timber for building, fencing, fuel and for commercial purposes.
- (7) An extensive and well-protected harbour.
- (8) Facilities for intercourse with Fort Garry and the Red and Assiniboine and other rivers, both North and South.

The first party of colonists from Ontario and the U.S.A. numbered nearly four hundred souls. (37) They arrived in Winnipeg in August, and after a short sojourn there, started for the 'Land

of Promise' in nine flat boats tied together in groups of threes. (38) These they floated down the Red River. When the flotilla arrived at Lake Winnipeg it was met by a Hudson's Bay Company boat, the Colville, and towed to its destination. The day of arrival was October 21st, known in the Icelandic Calendar as the last day of summer. (39)

No time was lost in putting up shelters for the winter was near. In a short time a group of cabins had been built and the pioneers elected five town councillors, or supervisors, and named the village Gimli, or Paradise.

A few days after this first party of Icelanders came to New Iceland winter set in and the lake froze. This misfortune made the task of building homes a cold and difficult one. Added to this, very little fish was obtained from the lake because the nets which the settlers had with them were too large meshed for the fish which they were likely to catch. Snow, which was sometimes three feet deep rendered the transportation of supplies slow and difficult. Finally, the majority of the party were now almost entirely without means after their sojourn of about two years in the country, during which time they had drifted from place to place.

Between the years 1875 and 1877 the Dominion Government loaned the Icelanders sums of money amounting to \$80,000.00. (40) This loan proved a veritable God-send to the needy immigrants during their first three trying years. It was given on the understanding that no repayment be exacted during the first five years, but it was all to be paid by 1887. Up to the close of 1877 a total of \$65,803.21 in goods alone were loaned to the Icelanders, (41) all of which were

absolute necessities. This money has never been paid to the government, but it seems fairly apparent that the government, when it saw the difficulties under which the settlers labored to secure the bare necessities of life, decided to look upon this assistance as a free grant. In any event, no recent attempt has been made by the government to collect this money.

It is quite safe to say that the settlers could never have survived during these first three years without the government loan. For it, and it alone, provided their main means of subsistence.

In the fall of 1876 a smallpox epidemic raged throughout the settlement and carried off 102 members of the settlement, mainly young people and children.(42) The whole settlement was placed under quarantine, and a guard of soldiers was drawn between New Iceland and Manitoba to prevent all intercourse. The Dominion Government sent one doctor and the Provincial Government two, to attend to the sufferers. The quarantine lasted 228 days, and during this time trade was very difficult and supplies were hard to get. On July 20th, 1877 the quarantine was lifted.(43)

"The smallpox had a bad effect on the minds of the majority of the people. They felt themselves to be too isolated to receive proper medical attention quickly in time of need, and that the detached situation of the settlement might prove dangerous under similar circumstances. This gave rise to considerable dissatisfaction with the place, but this discontent, though widespread, was not deep rooted and soon disappeared."(44)

"It is quite safe to assert that the smallpox period is the most trying and difficult which New Iceland has ever experienced.

The sufferings of the sick, the difficulties of properly attending to them, the ignorance of the people in an isolated quarter of a foreign land, the poverty and home-sickness, all contributed to make life in New Iceland dreary and arduous in the beginning." (45)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

During the first winter, a council consisting of five men was chosen at Gimli, January 4th, 1876, to supervise the distribution of the government loan and other matters affecting the general welfare of the people. (46) After the New Year, 1877, the question of choosing a governing body for the whole settlement arose. Two meetings were called forthwith, one at Gimli and the other at Riverton. A committee of five was chosen to compose a draft of provisional laws regulating government by council. These laws were later compared, and ratified by a majority vote at a general meeting held at Gimli Feb. 5th. (47)

In accordance with these laws the whole settlement was divided into districts called Willow Point (Vidines), Arnes, Riverton (Fljotsbyggd), and Big Island (Mikley), now called Hecla Island. As provided for by these laws, nominations and elections were held in all the districts on the 14th of the same month as that in which the meeting was called. A council (Bygddarnefnd) was elected in each district. These councils each chose one of their number as president. On February 21st all these councils met at Sandy Bar, one of the village sites in New Iceland, to elect, among other matters, a president, and vice-president to preside over matters pertaining to the four settlements. The body assisting them, composed of the four dis-

district council presidents, was called Thingrad, and the area over which their jurisdiction extended, Lake Shire (Vatnsthing). The laws were adopted at a meeting held at Sandy Bar, Jan. 11th, 1878. (48) The constitution mentioned above was patterned on exactly the same lines as the local government in Iceland, although the names were different. (49)

This government lasted till 1887, and is absolutely unique in the story of the Icelandic settlements in America. This was possible because the settlement was reserved exclusively for Icelanders. As a matter of fact the district was not such as to invite competition in settlement.

Gjerset has the following to say concerning it: (50)

"This fundamental law, the only one of its kind among the Icelanders in America, remained in force till 1887. New Iceland was a state with its own constitution, laws and government, even its own language and distinct nationality. No other people than the Icelanders were allowed to settle within its borders, but in all except local affairs it remained under the authority of the Canadian Government."

LORD DUFFERIN'S VISIT TO NEW ICELAND:

During the summer of 1877 Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada visited Manitoba. After having visited various parts of the province he honored New Iceland with a personal visit. He arrived in Gimli early in the morning of Sept. 14th or 15th, 1877. (51) ##

Gudlaugur Magnússon states on Page 50, Almanak 1899 that Lord Dufferin arrived on the 14th of Sept. Lord Dufferin's state papers give the date as Sept. 15th.

There he was received with great enthusiasm, a speaking platform was constructed and the English and Danish flags were raised.

When Lord Dufferin had taken his place on the platform Fridjon Fridricksson read him an address on behalf of the immigrants, in which he mentioned that they welcomed him not only as Her Majesty's representative, but as a true friend, whose name was highly esteemed, both by those assembled and by many people in the Motherland. The address touched briefly on the hardships which the newcomers had endured during the first long and severe winter, and also from sickness and the rigorous quarantine which had been prolonged so far beyond reasonable bounds. It also evinced a spirit of hope and optimism as shown by the following extract: (52)

"But today, under more favorable circumstances the Icelanders rejoice in the thought that the dark day of adversity has at length passed away and that a brighter time has come, wherein they are able to realize that the advantages of their position here in New Iceland are so much greater than those they possessed at home.

"We gratefully acknowledge the help extended to us by the government of Canada in the form of a loan which we hope to repay faithfully with interest. While it is to be regretted that unfavorable circumstances have prevented more extensive fields to be cultivated, we are yet thankful for the prospects of a good crop from excellent soil.

"We greatly prize the rich pasturage and the abundant supply of hay for our stock -- these true sources of future wealth.

We could not but rejoice in the plentiful supply of good fish from the waters of this Lake Winnipeg. With an inexhaustible supply of wood for building, fencing and fuel, we are better able to contend with the rigorous climate. And the possession of a good winter road, safely sheltered in the forest, secures to us great facilities for intercommunication.

"We gladly accept our position as British subjects, with all the rights and privileges connected therewith. As such we desire to be placed in the possession of these rights, being resolved to uphold and preserve them. In the maintenance of public order and in the defence of our country we are ready to partake, and faithfully to do that duty which 'England expects of every man.'"

In reply Lord Dufferin expressed his pleasure at meeting again representatives of a race, of whose dramatic history, picturesque literature and kindness, he had first hand knowledge. He expressed his sorrow at having heard of the terrible hardships which the Icelanders had experienced, but trusted that they were now embarked on a career of happiness and prosperity. Further, he said, that although the Icelanders had come to Canada ignorant of the three arts most necessary to a Canadian colonist --- the felling of timber, the plowing of land and the construction of highways, yet he felt that their intelligence, education and intellectual activity, together with practice and experience would soon make them masters of all three. Dufferin expressed his pleasure with the general appearance of the homes which he had visited, and commented on the fact that no matter how bare or scanty its furniture, no home was without a library of twenty or thirty volumes.

In closing he said: (53)

"I trust you will continue to cherish for all time the heart stirring literature of your nation, and that from generation to generation your little ones will continue to learn in your ancient Sagas that industry, energy, fortitude, perseverance and stubborn endurance have ever been the characteristics of the noble Icelandic race. I have pledged my personal credit to my Canadian friends on the successful development of your settlement."

In spite of the optimism of the settlers and the confidence of rapid progress expressed by Dufferin, this settlement was doomed to experience still further setbacks before it became firmly established.

The years 1878-9-80 were very wet. Transportation was difficult or nearly impossible; hay hard to get and cattle starving. In 1880 the lake was very high and flooded most of the settlement. (54)

During the winter of 1877-78 a religious dispute between Rev. P. Thorlaksson and Rev. Jon Bjarnason divided the Icelanders into two camps. (55) These misfortunes caused general discontent and made the people think of moving away. From 1878 many moved to Dakota under the leadership of Thorlaksson.

In 1880 the Argyle settlement was formed mainly by followers of Bjarnason, (56) others went to Winnipeg. In 1886, Icelanders from Winnipeg and New Iceland began to settle in Thingvalla, Sask. When this migration ceased only fifty families remained in the whole of New Iceland. Since that time many people from Iceland and other places have settled in New Iceland, and it is now the most Icelandic district in America.

In 1892 its population numbered 1409 souls. (57)

This settlement has produced many distinguished scholars, who have taken an active part in the university life and educational work of Canada. The most noted ones are: The Arctic explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, who was born at Arnes, 1879, but received his education in the U.S.A., and Dr. Thorbergur Thorvaldson, a graduate of the University of Manitoba and of Harvard, now Dean of the Dept. of Chemistry in the University of Saskatchewan.

ICELANDERS IN WINNIPEG:

When the first Icelandic settlers stopped at Winnipeg on their way to New Iceland a few of them, mainly girls who hired out with Canadian families as domestics, stayed in Winnipeg over the winter.

During the summer of 1876 a few Icelanders, men and women, came to Winnipeg to look for work. They were driven to this course by the hand-to-mouth conditions which prevailed in New Iceland. The same summer, 1876, 1200 Icelanders came direct from Iceland to Winnipeg. (58) This was the largest party of settlers which had left Iceland up to this time. Many of these settled in Winnipeg, although the majority went to New Iceland. The ones that remained were mainly the younger people.

Dufferin in his speech at Gimli had the following to say with regard to the wisdom of this course. (59)

"I have learned with a great deal of satisfaction that numbers of your young women have entered the households of various Canadian families, where they will not only acquire the English language, which it is most desirable you should all know, and which they can teach their brothers and sisters, and

I trust I may add, in course of time their children -- but will also learn those lessons of domestic economy and house-wifely neatness which are so necessary to the well-being, health and cheerfulness of our homes. I am also happy to be able to add that I have received the best accounts from a great number of people of the good conduct, handiness and docility of these young Ingeborgs, Ragnhildas, Theras and Gudruns, who I trust will do credit to the epical ancestresses from whom they have inherited their names. Many of the homes I have visited today have evident signs in their airiness, neatness and well-ordered appearance of possessing a housewife who had already profited from her contact with the outer world."

While the services of the women and girls were much in demand, the same was not the case with the men. They were not skilled tradesmen and had to seek day labor, which was very scarce. Some of them secured work ^{on the} transcontinental Railway, which was being built East of Selkirk at that time, others unloaded Red River boats when the opportunity presented itself, at a wage of 20¢ per hour. A few worked on the boats which plied the Red River between Winnipeg and Fisher's Landing in Dakota, but few ever made more than one trip on these boats, for most of the regular boat crews had worked on boats on the Mississippi River and had been accustomed to slave labor. The Icelanders found them cruel and heartless taskmasters. Pay on the boats was \$40.00 per month.

The first Icelanders to come to Winnipeg were practically destitute. Those who had any means bought lumber and built crude shanties down beside the Red River on property belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Others slept in the open.

Some time later the Company ordered these squatters to leave.

When the smallpox quarantine was lifted in New Iceland numbers of the people in that settlement came to Winnipeg to secure work, (60) but these unfortunates were shunned by the people there. Hungry and neglected many were sometimes compelled to beg for food.

The first few years were the most trying, but in time the Icelanders became accustomed to Canadian ways and methods, and hardships became a thing of the past.

Winnipeg is now, it is generally conceded, the centre of the intellectual life of the Icelanders in America. The Icelanders in that city number about 6,000,## and they are, taken as a whole, as progressive, diligent, prosperous and law abiding as any other racial group in the city.

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN NORTH DAKOTA:

The father of this settlement in Pembina County, N. Dakota was Rev. Páll Thorlaksson. He went to New Iceland in the fall of 1877 and took charge of a regular congregation there. (61) During his stay he inspected the land far and wide, and came to the conclusion that the place was entirely unsuited to the Icelanders, being low, and in many places swampy.

The smallpox and other sicknesses, which had visited the newcomers were to a large degree attributed to the nature of the land in the settlement itself. Rev. Thorlaksson pondered this question and felt that unless some drastic action was taken

See page

at once the majority of the Icelanders who came to America would doubtless come to New Iceland and fare no better than the earlier arrivals. Again, we must not overlook the effect of Thorlaksson's religious disputes with Rev. Bjarnason, which divided the settlers in New Iceland into two hostile factions⁽⁶²⁾ Thorlaksson determined, in spite of considerable opposition and criticism from many Icelanders, and also from the government officials, to seek a more suitable site for a colony.

In April, 1877, Thorlaksson left Gimli with three companions.⁽⁶³⁾ In Winnipeg they were joined by two other men. Their first intention was to inspect the land near Lyon County, Minnesota, but while they were in Winnipeg, Mr. Hunter, editor of the Standard, gave them such a glowing account of the land in Pembina County, N. Dakota,⁽⁶⁴⁾ that it was decided to inspect that place. This was done and the land, grassy plains, dotted here and there with clumps of trees, appealed greatly to the group. Thorlaksson himself journeyed three hundred miles to S. Dakota and Minnesota but felt that Pembina County would be the wisest choice for the following reasons:

- (1) Nearness to New Iceland.
- (2) Minnesota possessed no trees, whereas there was an abundance of trees in Pembina County which could furnish the settlers with building materials for houses, and also provide cord wood and enable the settlers to gain a livelihood until the soil should yield its crops.

The result of this inspection was reported to New Iceland, and aroused great interest there. Thorlaksson addressed a meeting and presented his views. Later he held a meeting of his

congregation and a large number of them signified their willingness to go, in the face of determined opposition. The government was strongly opposed to the movement and demanded of those who contemplated leaving payment of their share of the government loan before departing.⁽⁶⁵⁾ As a matter of fact some of those who moved had their cattle and effects seized at the border of the settlement.

In the fall of 1879 there were fifty families in the new settlement, and had it not been for the untiring efforts and never-failing courage of Thorlaksson, most of them would have either starved during the winter or returned to New Iceland. Thorlaksson borrowed and solicited money, cattle and food from his Norwegian friends, which enabled him to pull his charges through the winter.

In 1880, when New Iceland was flooded by the waters of Lake Winnipeg, large numbers of the people there moved to N. Dakota.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The next year, 1881-2, those who had settled in Nova Scotia came to Dakota.⁽⁶⁷⁾

These first years were the most difficult, but little time had passed before the settlement had taken firm root and was well on the way towards making the Icelandic settlement what it is today -- one of the most prosperous and progressive Icelandic colonies in America.

On March 12th, 1882 Rev. Pall Thorlaksson died.⁽⁶⁸⁾ He had never enjoyed good health, and his efforts to establish his settlement on a firm footing had worn him out. His name and

memory are respected by all Icelanders, but especially by those in N. Dakota where the descendants of the Icelanders who moved there at his instigation, revere his name. The Dakota settlement is his monument, and the progress it has made has justified his every hope and promise.

The four farmers who composed an economic survey of the N. Dakota settlement close their essay thus: (69)

"As one looks back over the fifty years of Icelandic pioneering in N. Dakota, one cannot fail to admit that much has been accomplished, for now there are smiling fields and attractive homes where formerly there was only a wilderness of uncultivated prairie and heavy forests. The trials that Icelandic pioneers have had to endure have often been bitter, but they have been granted the redeeming quality of profiting by their struggles in the end, in one way or another. We, four elderly farmers, who have compiled this survey cannot wish for our descendants anything better than that they too, may gain the reputation that the Icelandic pioneers had in former times -- that they were men of their word and dependable in all their relations with their fellow men. "

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN ARGYLE:

The settlement is situated in parts of townships 5, 6, 7 and 8, in ranges 13, 14 and 15, West of the first Meridian, 100 miles South-west from Winnipeg, and thirty miles North of the U.S.A. boundary. (70) From East to West in the Southern part of the settlement the land is hilly, and was, in the early days of the settlement quite heavily forested. North of these hills the land is quite high and level, and North of the high land

there was, when the Icelanders first came, a large swamp with an abundance of grass. Since then the Manitoba government had part of the swamp drained, thus making available a considerable extent of good land. The principal towns in the settlement are Glenboro, Cypress River and Baldur.

The first settlers to this district came from New Iceland during the period from 1880-86. (71) During that time, and up to 1894 many Icelanders came straight to that settlement from Iceland. (72) The first settlers from New Iceland left that place for the same reasons that many others went to N. Dakota, with this difference, that most of the first arrivals were followers of Rev. Jon Bjarnason. (73)

The land was of the very best, being well suited to the growing of all kinds of grain and also to the raising of stock. B. L. Baldvinsson, Icelandic immigration agent for the Dominion government in his report for 1891 calls it the "premier settlement in Canada", and his report shows that by that year the settlement had made wonderful progress, and was well maintaining its position as the foremost of all the foreign colonies in this country. (74) In 1895 there were 900 Icelanders in this district.

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT EAST OF LAKE MANITOBA AND IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SHOAL LAKE:

Situation: (75)

The South boundary of the Icelandic settlement East of Lake Winnipeg is the line dividing townships 17 and 18. There are very few Icelanders living in township 18. The main settle

ment is in township 19, all the way from Lake Manitoba East to Shoal Lake (Grunnavatnsbyggd) and extends over townships 18, 19 and 20, Range 2, 3, and half of range 4, West from the first Meridian. The Western part of the settlement is called Swan Lake (Alflavatnsglenda). Its Southern boundary is the line between townships 17 and 18, and its Eastern boundary the Western boundary of Shoal Lake district. Its Northern boundary is in township 20 to where the land North and West of the lake is settled by Canadians, Scotchmen, Swedes and Norwegians. In the Western part of township 22 there is a large Indian Reserve along the lake shore. Northwest of that the Icelandic settlement commences again in townships 22, Ranges 8, 9 and 10, and extends North-west along the shore of Lake Manitoba North to Range 25 and East to Dog Lake, which lies in Range 8. The Southern and Western parts of these districts is called Siglunes, the Northern part the Narrows.

The land in these settlements is low, and in places swampy. It suffers frequently from floods caused by the rising of the waters in Lake Manitoba. These floods have caused many of the settlers to move frequently from one part of the settlement to another.

It was first settled by Icelanders from Winnipeg in the spring of 1887, (76) and from 1887-1900 a continual stream of Icelandic immigrants from Iceland, Winnipeg and other places flowed into the Swan Lake settlement. Large numbers came between the years 1890-1900, when the government promised to construct a railroad through the settlement and to build roads. (77)

The first settlers to the other districts in this settlement all came from Swan Lake.

In this introduction it is not my intention to discuss each of these settlements separately, since a fairly detailed account will be found in the appendix.

The Icelanders in these settlements go in for stock raising on a fairly large scale. The land in many parts of it is not suited to the cultivation of common grains, although in some parts promising yields have been obtained in recent years (since 1906). In the winter large numbers of the Icelanders engage in fishing on the lakes. This industry has grown to considerable proportions, and is generally very profitable.

Since 1900, sheep raising has been started, and this experiment is being watched with interest.

In 1892 there were 238 Icelanders in the Swan Lake settlement. (78)

CHAPTER IV ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS IN SASKATCHEWAN, ALBERTA,
AND ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN:

CHURCHBRIDGE(Thingvalla):

This settlement is situated in townships 22 and 23, in Ranges 31, 32 and 33, West of the first Meridian, 250 miles North-west of Winnipeg, in the district of Assiniboia(now Sask.)⁽⁷⁹⁾ It was started by Helgi Jonsson, editor of the Icelandic newspaper Leifur, published in Winnipeg, 1883-6.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Dominion immigration agent, A. F. Eden, has the following to say:

"In the end of July, 1885 Mr. Jonsson took a trip through the Western country, starting from Winnipeg and going to Minnedosa, from which point he drove to Birch and Shell River, and crossing the Assiniboine River at Shellmouth, inspected all the lands in Ranges 30, 31 and 32, West of the first Meridian, and Range 1, West of the second Meridian.

"Mr. Jonsson picked out township 22, in Ranges 21 and 22 as being the most suitable for Icelandic immigration, and applied to have these townships reserved for Icelandic settlement. An account of the trip was published in Leifur on August 17th, 1885, and 5000 copies of the paper were sent to Iceland and a few to Icelandic settlements in N. Dakota and Minnesota."⁽⁸¹⁾

Most of the early settlers to this district came from Winnipeg and Iceland. The first settlers were poor, but were materially assisted by loans which were made to them by the M. & N. W. Ry. Company.⁽⁸²⁾

This colony encountered two very grievous drawbacks during its first years:⁽⁸³⁾

(1) There was a great scarcity of water in that section of the country, and it was only with great difficulty that a sufficient supply was obtained to serve the settlers and their stock. Many of the settlers have dug four to eleven wells, ranging from 12 to 40 feet in depth without obtaining a sufficient supply of water.

(2) Annual occurrence of summer frosts in that portion of the country have made wheat growing an uncertain business. The country, however, is suited to stock raising, although many of the early settlers left that place because of droughts which killed the grass.

In 1891 there were 135 Icelandic settlers in this colony. The persons in their families numbered 544. (84)

FOAM LAKE & QUILL LAKE SETTLEMENT:

This district occupies more territory than any other Icelandic settlement in America. It is 48 miles long from East to West and takes in Ranges 10 to 19 West of the second Meridian. From South to North it varies from 12 to 24 miles in width, covering townships 29 - 34. The part settled mainly by Icelanders is ten miles wide and forty-eight miles long. (85) The soil has proved very fertile and produces all the common grains in great abundance.

The first Icelandic settlers came from Churchbridge (Thingvalla), Sask. in 1891, when that district was suffering from a severe drought. (86) Their numbers were greatly augmented in later years by others from N. Dakota, Minnesota and Winnipeg.

Frost and hail played havoc with the crops of the early arrivals, but in recent years they have diminished in severity and frequency of occurrence.

During the years 1891-8 a continuous stream of settlers flowed into the district, but at the close of that period all the good homestead lands had been "filed on".

Foam Lake, Leslie, Elfros, Mozart, Wynyard, Kandahar and Defoe are the principal towns in the settlement. There are, it is estimated, 800 Icelandic families in this part of Sask. The total number of Icelanders is about 3,600 (87), (1917).

Nine regular congregations have been organized by the Icelanders in this settlement. Four are Unitarian and five Lutheran. They are served by two ministers, one Lutheran, the other Unitarian. Besides churches, numerous societies exist in the towns.

The whole district is divided into four municipalities, Foam Lake, Elfros, Wynyard and Kandahar. The Icelanders take an active part in all municipal affairs, and have an adequate representation in the councils. In 1917 the provincial electoral division, of which the whole district is but a small part, was represented by an Icelander, W. H. Paulson from Leslie.

This settlement is, today, one of the richest and most progressive Icelandic settlements in America.

ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN ALBERTA:

RED DEER, OR MARKERVILLE:

This settlement is situated in parts of townships 36, 37 and 38 in Range 1, West of the fifth Meridian. (88)

The first Icelandic settlers came from Pembina County, N. Dakota during the summer of 1888. (89) In that year most of the good homestead lands in the neighborhood of the Icelandic settlement in Pembina County, N. Dakota had been "filed on", though the land was good and the prospects fairly bright for those who had sufficient capital, yet there were many who had little or no capital who felt that if they borrowed money at a high rate of interest to start farming, it would be a long time before they became financially independent. In the meantime, they would be working for the loan companies. Others there were who wished to leave because they found that the long, cold winters and the dry climate of N. Dakota was detrimental to their health.

Those who contemplated leaving N. Dakota held a meeting in March, 1888 to discuss the matter. It was decided to send Sigurd J. Bjornsson at the expense of the meeting to view the land on the Pacific coast. He was directed to choose a locality which had good facilities for fishing, hunting and stock raising as these occupations did not require very much initial capital. Mr. Bjornsson journeyed to B.C. and inspected land there but thought it unsuitable. On his return he stopped at Calgary and was directed to inspect the land North of the Red Deer River. This he did, and was so pleased with the land that he decided to advise the Icelanders to settle there. When he returned to Dakota he made his report, recommending that the Icelanders settle in Red Deer, Alberta, and his suggestion was accepted.

The party, numbering about fifty in all, went to Winnipeg, bought some necessary effects there and then proceeded to Calgary.

There they were delayed by heavy rains till the middle of June. Some of the party wished to remain there and secure work, the majority decided to proceed to Red Deer, which was eighty miles from Calgary.

Those in the party who had sufficient money bought three or four teams of horses and wagons, on which it was decided the party should travel to its destination.

About the middle of June the party set out. The journey was slow and arduous because the roads had been rendered practically impassible by rain. Again, when the Red Deer River was reached the party was delayed till flat boats were constructed.

These first arrivals invested all their capital in cattle. Fish was abundant in the lakes and rivers around. No work was to be had nearer than Calgary, and all those who could went there to secure employment.

In 1891 there were 39 Icelandic settlers in this district. The persons in their families numbered 166. Though by that time there were only seventy acres of land under cultivation there was considerable stock. (90)

In 1914 there were, it is estimated, 300 Icelanders in the settlement now called Markerville. Altogether there are about(1914)450 Icelanders in the whole of Alberta.

The Markerville settlement is associated among Icelanders in America with the name of Stephan G. Stephanson, the famous Icelandic poet, who made his home there for almost thirty years.

ICHLANDERS ON THE PACIFIC COAST:

At the present time, it is estimated, that there are about 2,000 Icelanders on the Pacific coast, chiefly in Seattle,

Blaine and Point Roberts, Wash., Bellingham, Wash., Vancouver, Okanagon and Vernon, B.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego, Cal., Warrenton, Sheridan and Portland, Oregon.

In the nineties, fishing and lumbering were profitable industries and attracted many Icelanders to the coast. Now they are to be found in every walk of life. Although a few came in the seventies and eighties the majority came between 1900 and 1905.

NUMBER OF ICELANDERS IN CANADA;

Volume 1 of the Dominion Census returns for 1921 gives the following figures, which are purported to be an accurate list of the total number of Icelanders in Canada;

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| ALBERTA..... | 507 |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA..... | 575 |
| MANITOBA..... | 11,043 |
| NOVA SCOTIA..... | 9 |
| ONTARIO..... | 137 |
| PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND..... | 1 |
| QUEBEC..... | 11 |
| SASKATCHEWAN..... | <u>3,593</u> |
| T O T A L..... | 15,876 |

Dominion Census for Manitoba, 1926 gives the number of Icelanders in Winnipeg as 3,252.

I have consulted the officials of the Icelandic National League and ministers of the Icelandic churches and find them very dissatisfied with the authenticity of the above figures.

Although the number of Icelanders in Winnipeg is given as 3,252 it is known from records of the Icelandic churches and the subscription lists of the two Icelandic weeklies that there are at least 5,000 in Winnipeg proper. In Greater Winnipeg there must be about 6,000. The number of Icelanders in Canada is variously estimated at between 30,000 and 35,000. It is safe to assume that the census takers classify many Icelanders as Scandinavians, and Icelandic women who have married men of other races according to the nationality of the husband. Dr. R. Petursson has knowledge of a list (incomplete as yet) which exists in Iceland, and contains the names of 17,000 Icelanders who emigrated to America between the years 1872 and 1898. The majority of these people went to Canada. During the period mentioned above the population of Iceland doubled itself, and it does not seem too hazardous to venture the suggestion that the Icelanders in Canada did likewise.

CHAPTER V. SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

CHURCHES:

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND:

The Icelanders always have been, and still are an intensely individualistic people accustomed to thinking and acting on their own initiative and responsibility.

During the 18th Century Rationalism found its way into Iceland, largely through the efforts of Chief Justice Magnus Stephensen. This movement was further promulgated by prominent literary men and professors of the only college in the Island; such as, Bjorn Gunnlaugsson, the mathematician, author of "Njola", which expounded a rationalistic theory of the universe; Dr. Petur Petursson, Bishop of Iceland, 1866-91; Rev. Matthias Jochumsson; Dr. Grimur Tomsen; Magnus Eirikason, and others. The prominent churchmen of the Island had been Liberals. The people were unaccustomed to religious authority and discipline. One and all believed that which seemed most reasonable, accepting or rejecting doctrines if, when tried by the test of reason they failed to appeal.

Being reared in a church under the protection of the state its rites and form of worship were never questioned. The institution itself was taken for granted as being essential to organized society. While the forms were observed people felt entirely free to think as they pleased about religious matters. The population being almost entirely rural, the minister naturally was the intellectual leader in his parish, and the church the intellectual and social centre of the community. Consequently general church attendance was assured as a matter of course.

This conception of religion had unconsciously permeated the whole Icelandic people high and low. Its trend was not recognized because there was no other religious organization in Iceland with which comparisons could be made.

When people with such a religious background came into contact with the conservatism of the Norwegian and German Synods in America, where a definite stand was demanded, they reacted in two ways; they either conformed or broke away entirely. This spirit of freedom is clearly demonstrated by the stand taken by the Icelanders in Gimli, 1877, when they were organizing a church and discussed the question of affiliating themselves with some church organization in America. The meeting decided that the congregation should not unite itself with any religious organization whatsoever, but should remain entirely independent and adapt itself to the needs and character of its members.⁽⁹¹⁾ However, when churches were formed the previous religious training of the people showed itself, for disputes were frequent and differences inevitable.

LUTHERAN CHURCHES:

Churches were among the first social organizations formed by the Icelanders whenever they established a settlement. The church and the pastor were of great importance. Around the first centered mainly the social life of the settlers, the latter was their guide and leader in spiritual and temporal matters. Although the Icelanders are by no means of one mind in religion, still this fact has encouraged independent thought. In the early years the controversies regarding religion had far-reaching results, causing, as we have seen, divisions into parties and

strained feeling, which sometimes, as in the case of Dakota, contributed among other causes to the founding of new settlements.

The Lutheran Synod, established in 1884, has proved a powerful social agency. Congregations belonging to it exist in most of the settlements in America. It organized Sunday Schools, which have given many Icelandic children instruction in their native tongue, and also some knowledge of their national heritage in literature and ideals. Besides this, it has published many books on various subjects. The Synod maintains an Icelandic Lutheran Junior College (Jon Bjarnason Academy) in Winnipeg, which possesses a fine library of Icelandic books and helps to support the Old Folks' Home at Gimli. Its monthly publication, the *Sameiningin*, is widely read.

Among the many distinguished Icelanders who have taken an active part in the work of the Synod towers the form of Rev. Jon Bjarnason (D. 1914). There is no doubt that he is the greatest Icelandic churchman who has come to America. No man has worked harder for the realization of the ideal of the church. For fully half his lifetime, he struggled to establish an Icelandic school, and it was only when his career was drawing to a close that success crowned his efforts, for in 1913 a school, subsequently called Jon Bjarnason Academy, was started. Most of its success may be attributed to the fact that Icelanders regard it as Jon Bjarnason's monument. In all the undertakings of his followers, whether social, religious or literary his influence was felt. A sincerely religious man, and an inspiring leader, he was undoubtedly more dearly beloved by his followers than any other Icelander in America. A life like his dedicated

unselfishly to the service of his fellow-men serves as a noble example for others to emulate.

UNITARIAN CHURCHES:

In recent years the Unitarian Church has gained, and continues to gain a large following among Icelanders. As a vital social agency its influence must not be overlooked. To the Icelanders, who are naturally individualistic and inquiring, its doctrines undoubtedly appeal. In Winnipeg the Unitarians have united with the Modernist faction among the Lutherans, and are known as the Icelandic Federated Church.

Probably the most distinguished Icelander who has been a member of the Unitarian church is Stephan G. Stephansson, the noted Icelandic poet. He was born in Iceland in the year 1853 and came to America in 1873, taking up land in Wisconsin. From there he moved to N. Dakota and thence to Markerville, Alberta. Educated entirely through his own efforts he attained a broad-mindedness and freedom of outlook, together with a penetrating insight into the very nature of things, which are the characteristics of the true poet. He is rightly regarded by all Icelanders as one of the greatest poets of a nation which has produced so many poets. It is a pity that his poems cannot be translated into English without losing some of their vital qualities. Five volumes of his works have been published to date. S. G. Stephansson died at his home in the Markerville settlement August 10th, 1927.

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS:

"The Icelanders are born politicians, and a few years after their arrival in this country are to be found actively participating in Canadian elections. Liberal and Conservative Clubs flourish in every large settlement. Born students, serious minded as a race, they take their politics in earnest and can debate and discuss problems of the Dominion, with an astonishing amount of intelligence." (92) The truth of the above quotation is born out by actual experience. The statement can perhaps be ventured that the Icelanders have exercised as much influence in Provincial and Dominion politics in proportion to their numbers as any other people resident in Canada.

In both the U.S.A. and Canada they are pretty well divided among the various political parties. In Manitoba the Provincial Electoral District of St. Andrews was from 1896 to 1913 represented by either Capt. S. Jonasson, Liberal, or B. L. Baldvins-son, Conservative. T. H. Johnson was for many years the Liberal member of Winnipeg centre. He served as Minister of Public Works and later as Attorney-General under Hon. T. C. Norris. At the present time there are two Icelandic members in the Provincial House. The distinction of being the first Icelander to secure a seat in the Dominion House goes to Col. H. M. Hannesson, who was elected for the constituency of Selkirk in 1925, but was defeated the following election. At the present time an Icelander, Joseph Thorsen, Rhodes Scholar, 1909, later Dean of the Manitoba Law School is representing Winnipeg in the Dominion House.

In Dakota Magnus Brynjolfsson was State Attorney for Pembina County from 1898 to 1910. Gudmundur G. Grimson won national attention by his handling of the Martin Talbert Case in Florida, and is now District Judge in North Dakota. Gunnar Bjornsson has been a member of the Minnesota Legislature. In 1924 he was Republican candidate for Congress, and although defeated he made a very creditable showing. He is the owner and editor of the Minnesota Mascot, a prominent Republican paper. Sveinbjorn Johnson has been a member of the N. Dakota House of Representatives, and held the position of Attorney-General of the State. Later he became Justice of the Supreme Court.

EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP:

In a province where the question of separate schools has caused so much controversy and bitterness it is a commentary upon the character and previous training of the Icelanders that there has never been a "language problem" as far as the public schools in the Icelandic settlements are concerned. The children are taught their mother tongue by their parents, who in most cases are educated and broad-minded and realize that their first duty is to make their children good citizens, able and willing to assume all the responsibilities that citizenship implies. No race shows a stronger desire for the education of their children, and as a result they are, considering their numbers, prominent in mercantile, professional and political life.

It is conceded that the supreme test of citizenship is the willingness to fight for ones country. Judged by this

standard the Icelanders have earned for themselves the name of good citizens, both in Canada and the U.S.A. Several enlisted during the Riel Rebellion, 1885(93), and also during the Boer War, and acquitted themselves with distinction. During the Great War between 1,500 and 2,000 Icelanders enlisted, about three-quarters of whom were from Canada. In this connection may be mentioned the Jon Sigurdsson Society, a society of Icelandic women affiliated with the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, which did splendid work during that trying period. This Society sponsored the compilation in 1923 of the Icelandic Soldiers' Book "Minningarrit Islenskra Hermanna", which contains an account of 1303 Icelanders who took part in the Great War.

SOCIETIES:

No sooner had the Icelanders established settlements in America than societies were organized. Their appearance was by no means unusual, being merely the natural outgrowth of the Icelandic character. The first arrivals wished to preserve and maintain their national identity, language and culture, and since they were few in number this purpose could be realized only by co-operation. From the very first these societies have done splendid work, helping the needy, teaching Icelandic to the young people, and training the Icelanders to become good citizens, whose first duty belongs to their adopted land.

Since 1890, the Icelanders have held an Icelandic National celebration in Winnipeg every summer, generally on August 2nd. This celebration dates back to the one held in Milwaukee, 1874, when the Icelanders there celebrated the one thousandth an-

niversary of the settlement of Iceland. (94) Similar celebrations are held in other Icelandic settlements in Canada and the U.S.A.

NEWSPAPERS:

As soon as the Icelanders had established themselves in New Iceland they began to talk about the necessity of establishing a newspaper. On September 10th, 1877 a newspaper, called Framfari (The Advance) was started at Riverton. (95) Disputes and divisions into factions in New Iceland, arising out of the administration of the settlement, religion, and other matters were largely responsible for the ruin, both of the settlement and the paper. In any event, in 1880, New Iceland was losing many settlers, and there were not sufficient left to support this undertaking. Although this paper only functioned till 1880, it provides us with a valuable source of material regarding the first years in this settlement.

On May 5th, 1883, Helgi Jonsson began publishing the first Icelandic newspaper in Winnipeg called Leifur. (96) This paper went out of existence in 1886. Its failure may be attributed largely to the editor, who was, by previous training and education entirely unsuited to that position. He was wholly unselfish and realized the importance of an Icelandic paper to the new settlers, who would, he felt, lose their identity entirely if they had no medium of expression.

Although these two ventures failed they prepared the ground for others. Winnipeg, the intellectual centre of the Icelanders in America now boasts two fine Icelandic weeklies,

Heimskringla(Conservative, now Progressive), established 1886, and Logberg(Liberal), established 1888.

In order to form any just estimate of the work that the Icelandic papers have done in preserving and maintaining the Icelandic language and national heritage in literature and ideals, one has only to view their contents. They have placed before their readers articles of interest on every conceivable topic. They have published the works of such distinguished Icelandic poets as Stephan G. Stephanson, Kristin^s Stefanson and J. Magnus Bjarnason, who have written most of their works in Canada. They have, by entering weekly the homes of 5,000 Icelanders, prevented them from disappearing entirely from history as a national group, like a drop of water disappears into the ocean.

CHAPTER VI. ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE & THE 1930 CELEBRATION.

In 1919 the Icelandic National League was formed along the same lines as societies like the "United Scottish" and the "Sons of England". The purposes of the League as enumerated in its constitution are⁽⁹⁷⁾: To work towards the end that the Icelanders may become as good citizens as possible in the life of the American Nations; To maintain and promote in America an interest in the Icelandic language and literature; To promote understanding and co-operation between the Icelanders in America and those in Iceland, and to acquaint people in this country with their best characteristics.⁽⁹⁸⁾

The League has branches in the principal Icelandic settlements. It is the most truly representative Icelandic Society in America, for its members include people who differ in religion and politics, yet they come together on common ground and work to preserve all that is best in their national heritage. Time was when the churches were the leaders in all important undertakings among the Icelanders. This stage is passing. The Icelanders realize that a church organization can never be truly representative.

The League publishes annually a very fine *Tímarit*. It also sponsors the teaching of Icelandic to the young people. In social, national and intellectual undertakings the League has become the most powerful force among the Icelanders in America.

In June, 1930, Iceland will celebrate the One Thousandth Anniversary of the National Parliament in Iceland. In 1925 the Parliament of Iceland, realizing the approach of this significant anniversary in the life of the nation, appointed what is known as the "Parliamentary Millennial Celebration Committee", drafted from the various political factions represented in the House. The Committee is given full power to organize and carry out a program which in a befitting manner shall commemorate and celebrate this unique event in the history of the nation. It is composed of the following members:

Tryggvi Thorhallsson, Prime Minister of Iceland

Jonas Jonsson, Minister of Justice

Asgeir Asgeirsson, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Johannes Johannesson, Comptroller general of the city of
Reykjavik

Professor Magnus Jonsson, Dean of the Divinity Faculty of
the University of Iceland

Sigurdur Eggerz, Manager of the Bank of Iceland

Petur Gudmundsson, Secretary and Member of the Labor
Council

In less than a year from the institution of this Committee, a request was received from the Chairman of the Committee by the President of the Icelandic National League, asking for cooperation in this undertaking, which was readily granted. At the convention of the League on February 22nd, 1926 a committee of three was appointed, later augmented to five, with power to add to its number as it deemed necessary. Within the year, the

membership had been increased to twelve. This Western Committee, known as the Icelandic Millennial Celebration Committee, as now constituted is composed of the following members:

J. J. Bildfell, former editor "Logberg", Winnipeg Man.

J. F. Kristjansson, Interpreter Colonization Dept., C.N.R.

Rev. Rogn. Petursson, Field Sec. United Conference of Icel. Churches, Winnipeg, Man.

A. P. Johannsson, Contractor and Builder, Winnipeg

Arni Eggertsson, Realtor and Ex-Alderman, Winnipeg

Rev. J. A. Sigurdsson, Pres. Icel. National League, Winnipeg

J. T. Thorson, M.P., Winnipeg South Centre, Winnipeg

W. H. Paulson, M.P.P., for Wynyard, Leslie, Sask.

Hon. G. Grimson, Judge of the District Court, Rugby, N. Dak.

Rev. Ragnar N. Kvaran, Pres. United Conference of Icel. Churches, Winnipeg

Sigfus Halldors, Editor "Heimskringla", Winnipeg

Hon. G. B. Bjornsson, Chairman Minnesota Tax Commission, St. Paul, Minn.

SCOPE & OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF COMMITTEE:

No sooner was this committee organized and completed than it was mutually understood that it would function in an official capacity as the representative and correspondent of the Parliamentary Committee in Iceland, and assume the labor and duties of the latter, in all affairs pertaining to publicity, organization, and the obtaining of public and official recognition by the authorities and government of Canada and the United States. It would act as an envoy or a medium between the public of Iceland and the Canadian and American Commonwealths. A cable and an official letter was received in 1927

from the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee to this effect. Similar recognition by the Icelandic constituents of Canada and the United States was implied by the institution and election of the Committee. It was elected and endorsed by the Icelandic National League, as its official representative, the only nationally representative body of Icelanders in Canada and the United States.

The task before the Committee was not an easy one. Among the major problems given it to solve, the following might be enumerated:

1. To obtain official recognition, for the event commemorated by the celebration, from Federal, State, and Provincial Governments of Canada and the United States; this recognition to be expressed in such tangible forms as would be deemed practical and fitting by the prospective governments.

2. To unite all the various Icelandic settlements in Canada and the United States in support of the undertaking; establish local committees as auxiliaries to the central committee and generally arouse interest in the movement.

3. To arouse interest of students of literature, history, law and political science, in the forthcoming event, by articles appearing in leading magazines of the two countries, dealing in an efficient and authoritative manner with the various phases of the celebration, pointing out the contribution made by the island to the general advancement of the culture and scholarship of Western Europe.

4. To organize an excursion to the island at a moderate rate of cost and of a magnitude in keeping with the dignity of the event, for people of Icelandic origin and others interested in visiting the country on the occasion of this Anniversary.

ORGANIZATION WORK:

In dealing with the first problem, it was felt that some difficulty might be encountered, in the way of obtaining proper consideration for this particular objective of the Committee, in higher official circles. A possible lack of information, stress of public duties, political contingencies, one or all, might contribute toward an indifferent attitude of those appealed to. These surmises, however, proved inaccurate as was demonstrated by the generous reception accorded the endeavors of the Committee. Both Premiers of the Provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Senators and Members of Congress from the states of N. Dakota and Minnesota, Members in the House of Parliament in Ottawa from the Provinces of Manitoba and Alberta, all responded most favorably to this request of the Committee and have promised their assistance. All showed themselves far better informed regarding the significance of this forthcoming event, the relative position held by the island in international, democratic and constitutional government, than those who should be in full possession of such facts by reason of training and descent. This is not surprising in itself, when it is borne in mind what splendid accomplishments many of these men bring to the office of public trust and representation. As an instance of that, the mere

mentioning is sufficient of that most searching and enlightening dissertation of President Calvin Coolidge, given at the Norwegian Centennial Celebration in Minneapolis, 1925. The Legislature of Saskatchewan has already sanctioned a grant toward the organization expenses of the Committee, and it is confidently looked forward to as highly probably that tangible recognition will be made, by all the aforementioned states and provinces, as well as the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States.

The second objective, as delineated above, has practically been reached, although considerable work remains yet to be done. For purposes of organization, the several communities have been divided into zones, twenty in number, and in each zone or district a committee has been appointed, constituting a local intelligence bureau for those who may, or actually have, decided to attend the celebration. This was only accomplished after a most thorough canvass of the settlements, by members of the central committee who have visited every district of importance, from Keewatin, Ont. to Vancouver, B.C., and from Chicago, Ill. to Los Angeles, Cal. In the United States, the chief Icelandic settlements are located at: Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, Minnesota, (Minn.); Pembina, Walsh, Cavalier, and Bottineau counties, N. Dakota; Spanish Fork, Utah; Blaine, Tacoma, Point Roberts, Seattle, Wash.; San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Cal. On the Canadian side of the Boundary they are centered in and around Keewatin, Ont.; Winnipeg,

Selkirk, Morden, Piney, Glenboro, Baldur, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, Winnipegosis, Swan River, and Brandon, Man.; Church-bridge, Calder, Gerald, Tantallon, Prince Albert, Wadena, Foam Lake, to Saskatoon, Sask., Edmonton, Markerville, Calgary, Grand Prairie, Alta.; Vancouver and the coast towns up to Prince Rupert, B.C. (Population is variously estimated from thirty to thirty-five thousand in Canada and twelve to fifteen in the United States). From these districts the majority of those making up the excursion will be drawn. During the interval from the present till April, 1930, all these settlements will be visited again, deposits and signatures obtained from those who are joining the party as all plans should be completed on or about the first of May of that year.

The third proposition, which may possibly be classified under the general heading of Publicity, was conceived by the Committee as distinct and on an entirely different basis from ordinary commercial advertising. It was felt that considerable misconception existed, concerning the country and the people, which might possibly operate against the ultimate success of the undertaking. It was to correct this popular misunderstanding, that these articles were thought of and incidentally to furnish some general information concerning a much neglected subject of general history. The articles, as thought of, were fourteen in number, and so arranged as to form a consecutive outline, depicting the influence exerted by the island on

contemporary thought and scholarship in Northern Europe.

The subject matters were as follows:

1. The Vikings and the Viking Age - Spirit of Enterprise.
2. Early Discoveries - mapping of the High Seas
3. Settlement of Iceland - Co-ordination of Individualism and Nationalism.
4. Institution of Parliament and Constitutional Government
5. Genius of Icelandic Law - Personal Liberty coupled with Social Safety.
6. Spiritual and Ethical Interpretation of Life
7. Classic Age - Preservation of Northern Culture
8. Historical Records of Western Europe
9. Dissemination of Northern Culture in Europe - Icelandic Scholarship and Literary Activity Abroad
10. Northern Renaissance of the 16th and 17th Centuries, Modern Philosophy, the Assertion of Rights of Man, etc.
11. The Reformation in Iceland
12. Social and Economic Progress of the 19th and 20th Cent.
13. Modern Icelandic Literature
14. Icelandic Colonization in Canada and the United States

These articles are to be correlated and later preserved in book form. Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the noted Arctic explorer has generously consented to undertake this task. The list, as completed, will embrace some of the most noted writers and scholars in Iceland, including the Bishop, the Dean of the Law School, the State Librarian, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the President of the University. Some of them will be written by Icelanders in America. They will be finished and ready for publication in the fall of 1929.

It is now proposed that the celebration will commence on the 27th of June, which means that the party should not leave Winnipeg later than has been pointed out by the Parliamentary Committee in Reykjavik, it being preferable that the visitors should arrive a few days prior to the official celebration to permit them to get settled before the festivities begin. Six weeks will be allowed for visiting in the island, fixing the date of departure approximately as that of August 5th. This schedule, however, is not final and the dates indicated are subject to change.

Hotel accommodation in Reykjavik is notoriously inadequate, but a very advantageous solution of the housing problem for the party was found in a new building under construction by the Government, the State hospital of Reykjavik. This building will be completed early next winter, and when finished will afford modern accommodation for at least 400 people. This building, through the kind offices of the Government and the Hospital Commission, was assigned to the party, free of charge.

Transportation of the party to the celebration grounds will be undertaken by the Government and partly by an automobile concern in Reykjavik for 7.50 kr. per person each way, or approximately \$3.40 the return. Camping facilities will be accorded the party in a very choice location on the grounds. Tents will be supplied by the government at cost, or if preferred by the visitors themselves.

The following Governments of Europe and America have been tendered an invitation to be officially represented at the

celebration:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Great Britain and Northern Ireland | - 2 | representatives |
| Irish Free State | - 2 | " |
| Dominion of Canada | - 2 | " |
| United States of America | - 2 | " |
| Denmark | - 2 | " |
| Norway | - 2 | " |
| Sweden | - 2 | " |
| Finland | - 2 | " |
| Holland | - 2 | " |
| Belgium | - 2 | " |
| France | - 2 | " |
| Switzerland | - 2 | " |
| Germany | - 2 | " |
| Italy | - 2 | " |
| Spain | - 2 | " |
| Portugal | - 2 | " |
| Czechoslovakia | - 2 | " |

Provincial Governments

| | | |
|---------------|-----|---|
| Manitoba | - 1 | " |
| Saskatchewan | - 1 | " |
| North Dakota | - 1 | " |
| Minnesota | - 1 | " |
| Isle of Man | - 1 | " |
| Faroe Islands | - 1 | " |

The representative delegates will be the guests of the nation during their stay in the island and will be accorded the same honor as visiting members of the European Royal Houses, with the exception of the reigning Sovereign. It has also been decided by the International Union of Northern Parliament, to hold their next session in Reykjavik, 1930. Naturally members of this great body of Parliamentarians of all the Northern countries of Europe will be tendered an official recognition by the Government.

The Icelandic Steamship Company has agreed to place a couple of their ships at the disposal of the party at a moderate cost for a circular tour around the island. It is also

arranged that these same boats will call for passengers all around the coast and bring them back to Reykjavik in due time for the official departure of the excursion.

There is now no longer any question of a united support from the Canadian or American citizens of Icelandic origin in favor of the excursion, as planned and outlined by the Committee. At the recent convention of the Icelandic National League, held in Winnipeg, February 27th, March 1st, and attended by over 300 delegates and members, this excursion was unanimously endorsed and commended to those who are intending to visit the island.

In 1930 the thoughts of all the Icelanders in America who cannot be present in person will be turned toward the scene of this momentous celebration taking place in "that island so smitten with snow-storms, so veiled in mist, so seamed with volcanic fire, so shaken by earthquakes as never Delos was shaken; and yet, in spite of all this, so mighty in the indomitable spirit of her sons, so subtle and far-sighted in her laws, and so free and independent for centuries against the tyranny of Norwegian kings." (99)

APPENDICES

I. APPENDICES TO CHAPTER IIA. UTAH

It was about the year 1850, that two Icelanders, Thorarinn Hafliðason and Gudmandur Gudmundsson, from the Westmen Islands, established themselves in Copenhagen to learn skilled trades. While residing in that place these men were converted to Mormonism. The former was the first Icelandic to adopt this form of worship. (100) When they returned home they tried to convert their relatives and friends on the Islands, and though ^{at first} little success attended their efforts, yet in time they gained a considerable following. Religion, accordingly, was the sole motive for Icelandic migration to Utah.

In the year 1855 a party of three Icelanders, Samuel Bjarnason, his wife, and another woman, Helga Jonsdottir, set out for Utah, arriving there early in 1856. (101) Bjarnason settled at Spanish Forks, which became the centre of the Icelandic settlement in Utah. In addition to these, nine others came to Utah in 1856 and the following year.

During the next fourteen or fifteen years there is no record of any further migration to Utah save that of one woman, the daughter of Samuel Bjarnason, who arrived in 1871 from Copenhagen.

In the year 1872 or thereabouts, Samuel Bjarnason and Loftur Jonsen returned to Iceland as representatives of the Mormon Church in the hope of gaining converts who would move

to Utah. They aroused considerable interest in Utah during their stay of more than a year, and as a result a considerable number of people moved to that place. Settlers came until 1892 or 1893, when the movement ceased entirely. (102)

After 1886, Icelanders who had no interest in Mormonism settled in Utah.

B (1) BRAZIL

The weather in the Northern part of Iceland during the winter of 1858-9, was said to be the worst which that part of Iceland had experienced during the whole century. The hardships which attended this bad weather gave rise to the idea of re-establishing the old Icelandic settlement in Greenland. (103)

A meeting was called to discuss this plan in Reykjadal. Einar Asmundsson came to the meeting and made a speech in which he spoke of the utter folly of leaving a cold climate for one which was known to be much colder. His views prevailed. At the same time he suggested Brazil as a likely place for settlement. Jonas Hallgrimsson was chosen to select the best site for the proposed settlement. It was intended that he should go to Brazil in the summer of 1862, but he was unable to leave until July, 1863, when he and three other men went to Brazil. (104) The following year he sent a long letter about his trip and conditions in Brazil back to Iceland. This letter was published in Nordanfara, 1864 and 1865.

In 1873 a report was circulated that those who wished to go to Brazil could obtain free passage. By that time however,

the interest and enthusiasm for settlement in Brazil had passed, but people were beginning to think about going to Canada the the U.S.A. (105) In 1873 three hundred people emigrated from Iceland to America, only thirty going to Brazil.

B (2) BRAZIL

Interest in migration to Brazil was first aroused when Einar Asmundsson issued a letter on February 4th, 1860, which was circulated in Thingeyjar and Eyjafjardarsysla asking prospective immigrants to that place for their signatures. Since few signatures were received the matter was dropped. (106)

In 1863 four men from Thingeyarsysla, Jon Einarsson, his son Jon, Jonas Hallgrimsson and Jonas Fridfinnsson, went to Brazil. They sailed on the merchant ship Johanna from Akureyri, July 11th, 1863, and landed in Copenhagen July 20th. August 6th they sailed to Kiel. From there they booked passage on the sail boat Caroline and arrived at Rio De Janeiro October 14th. Their final destination was the settlement "Dana Francisa". (107) Soon after two other families went to Brazil.

January 13th, 1865, a meeting was held at Ljosavatn to discuss the feasibility of establishing a settlement in Brazil. About 150 signified their willingness to go, but when it was learned that free fare to that place could not be obtained, the movement died down. (108)

Although the idea of going to Brazil was dropped, still interest in emigration had been awakened, and many began to

think seriously of moving to other parts of America, particularly Canada and the U.S.A.

C WASHINGTON ISLAND, U.S.A.

Previous to the year 1865 there had been very little mention made in Iceland of the feasibility of settlement in America. A few settlers went to Brazil and there was some talk of forming a settlement there, but few people went out.

In 1855 several converts to the Mormon faith went from the Westmen Islands to Utah, but this movement embraced only a small number. Its motive was purely religious, and had no bearing upon the subsequent movement of Icelanders to America, which cannot be said to have begun before 1870.

William Wickmann, a Dane, who had been employed as a clerk in a store in Iceland for about ten years emigrated to America in 1865. He took up his residence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he had relatives. Wickmann corresponded with his former employer, G. Thorgrimson, at Eyrrarbakka, lauding enthusiastically his new surroundings and mentioning that Lake Michigan abounded in fish. He suggested that the Icelanders would do well in America, since they could carry on fishing as was their custom in Iceland. Doubtless Wickmann was over-optimistic of his new home. Nevertheless much credit is due to him, since he was the first to direct the attention of the Icelanders to the opportunities in America. (109)

Emigration Begins:

On May 12th, 1870, three young men, Jon Gislason, Gudmundur Gudmundsson and Arni Gudmundsson sailed from

Eyrarbakka on the first lap of their journey to America. When they reached Reykjavik they were joined by Jon Einarsson. During their stay in Reykjavik many fruitless attempts were made to dissuade these rash young men from their venture. One was solemnly informed that if he went to America he would be eaten alive or made a slave like the negroes. At the conclusion of their stay in Reykjavik they booked passage on the steamship "Diana", bound for Copenhagen.

From Reykjavik, the ship went to the Faroe and the Shetland Islands, and thence to Copenhagen. From Copenhagen, after a stay of four days, they sailed on the "Pacific" to Hull, and from there they entrained to Liverpool. From Liverpool they sailed on the Allan liner "Austrian", and after a stormy passage docked at Quebec on the 18th or 19th of June. On their arrival, they boarded the train for Milwaukee, and after many wearisome delays, usual to freight trains, reached their destination on the 27th of the same month. (110)

Settlement on the Island:

The first settlers were Jon Gislason, Gudmundur Gudmundsson and Arni Gudmundsson. (1870)

Description: (111) Washington Island (the Indian name was Pottavatomic) lies 45 degrees, 20 minutes, North latitude and 86 degrees, 50 minutes West longitude in the Northwestern end of Lake Michigan, almost seven miles North of Door County Point. The stretch of water separating the island from the mainland is called "Death's Door", and joins Lake Michigan to Green Bay.

The Island is seven miles long and approximately five miles wide. The total area covered by the Island is about 28 square miles. Around it lie several smaller islands; to the North, Rock Island, to the South, Detroit, Plum and Pilot. On three of these islands there are lighthouses, and on Plum Island a life-saving station. In area, the islands occupy about one township.

The Island, where these first settlers took up their residence was, at the time of their arrival, inhabited by six or eight farmers, who had started small clearings in the forest and were building log shanties. Previously the island had been, and for some time continued to be, the residence of fishermen. These people made no improvements. They were content to cut down a few trees for firewood, and to fashion from Fir, staves for the barrels in which they shipped their salt fish. Whereas, fish is today, packed in ice and shipped to all parts of America.

Little by little the cultivated clearings grew and became productive. Tree stumps rotted, and the land presented a fair appearance, and in time, the log cabins disappeared and were replaced by frame houses. Fences of wood, and the well-known American zig-zag fence, were later replaced by barb wire. Roads were gradually improved. Wells were dug on every farm - a sharp contrast to the days when water was brought in barrels and used sparingly. By 1899 there were four schools on the Island - the pupils numbering 360.

In conclusion it may be said, that, though the story of this little settlement is in the main prosaic, and has been

duplicated many times elsewhere, nevertheless the Icelanders there contributed their full share toward making this little island one of the fairest districts in the State.

D MUSKOKA, ONTARIO

In the month of July, 1873, 153 Icelanders destined for Canada assembled at Akureyri, in the Northern part of Iceland. This was the first group of any size to set out upon that hazardous venture. (112)

The people in Iceland, at this time, knew little of North America, nor had they any idea where to seek the likeliest spot for settlement. Consequently the members of this first group were undecided as to their destination.

In 1872 a theological student named Pall Thorlaksson, together with his brother Harold and several others, had moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A. Their letters had been published in the newspaper Nordanfara during the winter in 1872-3. Although they contained little besides an account of how well they themselves had fared, nevertheless, it was mainly from them, and also from some Norse letters, that the people of Iceland derived their knowledge of America. (113)

The emigrants had to wait a long time at Akureyri for the ship which was to take them to Scotland. During the delay, meetings were held to decide upon their destination. All wished to keep the group together and to found an Icelandic settlement. It was then discovered that several had agreed to go to Milwaukee and were unwilling to change their plans. Some wished to go to Nova Scotia and others to Western Canada. At last it was

decided that the whole group, with the exception of those going to Milwaukee, should go to Ontario, Canada, because it was said that there was plenty of work and free land to be had there. Three leaders were then chosen, Olafur Olafsson, Fridjon Fridriksson and Baldvin Helgasson.

On August 4th the group, 153 in number, set out from Akureyri on board the steamship "Queen". Several were denied passage because the ship was overcrowded. These came by a later boat. They numbered between twenty and thirty. Others that were already on board refused to continue the voyage for the same reason.

The ship docked at Granton, Scotland, on August 10th. From there, the emigrants took the train to Glasgow and embarked on the Allan Line ship "Manitoba" on August 12th. They arrived at Quebec, August 25th. From there they entrained for Ontario and reached Toronto August 27th.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ During the last lap of the journey the Milwaukee party departed from the main body of immigrants.

From Quebec all were given free passage to whichever centre in Ontario they wished to go. This was done on the understanding that they reside three months in Canada. A stop of two days was made in Toronto for the purpose of ascertaining the location of the likeliest place for settlement. The majority wished to take up land at once and to secure work, as only a few of the group had sufficient money to start farming at once.

At Muskoka, in Ontario, there was, so rumor said, plenty of government land suitable for homesteads. The newcomers were

informed that there was plenty of work at Rosseau, a little town situated beside Rosseau River, in the district of Muskoka. It was then decided that the whole party should go there. They set out on the 29th of August, and arrived there the following day. (115) Work was found to be scarce, a discovery which somewhat dampened the spirits of the group. All the land around Rosseau had been taken, but the Icelanders were directed to land fifteen miles North of Rosseau. This land proved unsatisfactory on investigation. Land six miles East of Rosseau was found to be more suitable. It was decided to found an Icelandic settlement there provided the government would construct a wagon road during the following summer from Rosseau East through the contemplated settlement.

The promise was received about two weeks later and many Icelanders made application for homesteads. The men then obtained work on the projected road. The pay was small, but the workers were quite unaccustomed to such labor. When the road was completed, the summer was so far advanced that it was not possible to move to the land nor build houses to prepare for the winter. The majority were practically penniless, and needed to secure work at once. Consequently only two of the party, Baldvin Helgason and David Davidsson, who had purchased jointly, two hundred acres adjoining the projected settlement were able to move to their land for the winter. There was a house on the farm, and quite a bit of hay land. After moving with much difficulty, these men purchased some cattle and put up hay for fodder after October 8th.

Many of the Icelanders stayed at Rosseau during the winter, securing work as wood choppers, many others went to various places in search of employment. Then the party began to disintegrate. The majority, however, intended to return to the new settlement as soon as circumstances permitted.

In the spring of 1874 Sigtryggur Jonasson, later editor of Logberg, came to the new settlement on a land inspection trip. He had come from Iceland in 1872 and had settled in Southern Ontario. He was therefore, the first Icelandic who moved to Canada. (116) The summer of 1874 he was sent by the Ontario government to Quebec to meet a large party of settlers who were on their way from Iceland. This party he accompanied to Kinmount, Ontario, where there was plenty of railway work to be had.

In the fall of 1875 Sigtryggur Jonasson came back to Muskoka, shortly before the Icelanders at Kinmount moved to Gimli. He held a meeting in Rosseau and told the new arrivals about his land inspection trip to Manitoba. He offered all the Icelanders who wished to go immediately, free passage to Gimli from any part of Ontario. As a result, of his efforts nearly all the Icelanders in Ontario moved to Manitoba. (117) Those who had settled on farms were naturally unwilling to leave them unless they received something for the labor bestowed on their farms. A few Icelanders came to this district from Iceland during the next few years. Few of them settled permanently and remained only till they could earn enough money

to pay their fare West.

During the spring and fall of the same year, many Icelanders moved Eastward to Nova Scotia with the intention of founding an Icelandic settlement there. At this point we may close the story of the Icelandic settlement in Muskoka, Ontario.

From 1880-4 there was a considerable exodus from Muskoka to Pembina County in North Dakota, and in 1899 only five Icelandic families remained. (118)

E KINMOUNT & NOVA SCOTIA (119)

Translated "in toto" from article cited in reference #119.

(List of settlers on pages 52 to 54 omitted.)

In the fall of 1874, on September 23rd, the steamship "St. Patrick" came directly from Iceland to Quebec with 365 (not 250 as mentioned in the 1899 Almanak) Icelanders on board. This group went intact to Kinmount, sixty miles North of Toronto, and lived there till winter in log cabins provided by the Ontario government.

Shortly after their arrival there came from Nova Scotia a young man named Johannes Arngrimsson, who said he represented the government of Nova Scotia and was authorized by it to offer the Icelanders land there. He made much of the land in Nova Scotia, and its advantages. Since he was plausible and energetic he made a good impression and instilled considerable discontentment among those who were beginning to question very much the future possibilities of Kinmount.

At that time, no one had the slightest idea of the possibilities of the great and promising West in which the Icelanders now dwell. Johannes Arngrimsson returned to Halifax in the fall and was accompanied by several young men who lived with him there during the winter. Many married men who had families, signed up with him and went to Nova Scotia the following spring and fall. They numbered fully eighty. This number was slowly augmented by new arrivals from Iceland. These settlers in time increased to two hundred, or probably more, if we count those in the new settlement as well as those in the little town of Lockport nearby. The ones that settled at Lockport found work at the canneries (fishing and rowing).

The contemplated site of the new settlement was hilly, though of considerable extent. It was called Mooseland Heights. It had formerly been a hunting ground, but at this time most of the animals had disappeared. The settlement lies South of a valley, long inhabited, called Mosquodoboit. The district though large and fair is not fertile. Since the new land was hilly and covered with forest it was ill-suited to cultivation. There were many large stones, and a layer of thick moss between the trees. Meadow land was scanty, and the hunting not worth mentioning.

This territory is about ten miles from East to West, and is about forty miles from the railroad and thirty miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Every family was given 100 acres of land, of which one acre was cleared. The government had built on every

farm a good log house. For the first two summers the men were provided with work in building a road through the new settlement, which was paid for by the government.

The natives of that part told the new arrivals that the land was of the best kind, being fertile, and well suited to cultivation when cleared. This information had to be taken at its face value.

The men displayed the greatest energy in clearing away the forest although they were unaccustomed to this class of work. All the trees and scrub had to be burned since there was no market for it. In time, the settlers realized that the land was not as represented, and their thoughts turned to the West, the Red River Valley, North Dakota and to Manitoba. In 1861, the whole group, with the exception of a few who waited till the next spring, moved to North Dakota and Manitoba. Although the majority went to the above mentioned districts, yet a few went to Minnesota.

Though this settlement proved a dismal failure it must, in justice be said, that the government of Nova Scotia endeavoured to assist it in every possible way. Immediately upon the arrival of the settlers the government built a schoolhouse at its own expense. It also supplied and paid the salary of an English teacher. This school supplied a real need, and was of great help to the young people who wished to learn English. An agricultural expert was sent to advise the Icelanders as to the best methods of farming. The government erred in attempting to settle anyone on such utterly worthless land. The

government, however, acted in good faith. The quality and the suitability of the land had been misrepresented to the government. On learning that the land was worthless, no obstacle was placed in the way of the settlers departing for the West. This spirit of good faith was clearly demonstrated when the Icelanders received title deeds to their homesteads even after it was known that they intended to leave the district. This proved a *Godsend* to many who were able to sell their holdings, thereby obtaining sufficient money to pay their passage to the West.

The natives marvelled at the diligence of the settlers and the many improvements on their farms. Many had cleared and fenced fully twenty acres. Because it was impossible to plough on account of the stones and tree stumps they sowed seed for hay. The grass was mowed for a year or two, and after that the clearing was used as a pasture.

The fact that there were only three deaths in this settlement over a period of six years proves conclusively that the Icelanders enjoyed good health.

Church Affairs:

There is little that can be said concerning church matters in the settlement. No Icelandic ministers came there, for there were few of them on this side of the Atlantic, and the ones that were in America were far away. There was a German Lutheran settlement to the South-west called Lunenburg. Its ministers came frequently to Mooseland. They formed a congregation, preached in English, christened children, confirmed young people, and performed marriage ceremonies.

F MINNESOTA

Situation: Lyon,⁽¹²⁰⁾ Yellow Medicine and Lincoln counties in the South-west part of Minnesota are 150 miles South-west of St. Paul, the capital of the state. Here, the Icelandic settlement was divided into four parts. Being adjacent to one another the four were grouped together under the name Icelandic Settlement in Minnesota.

The town of Minneota, in Lyon County, is the central, or focal point of the settlement. It had (1900) a population of about 1,000, which was made up of Norwegians, Icelanders and Americans.

Marshall, 12 miles east of Minneota, with a population of about two thousand, contains another group of Icelanders. Five or ten miles East of Minneota, taking in part of Yellow Medicine county, (it is mainly in the latter) lies Austurbyggd. Seven to fourteen miles West of Minneota lies Vesturbyggd. Two are rural, and two are town settlements. Besides these, several settlers in the vicinity of Minneota are not included in either settlement. In the Western division there are about fifty Icelanders, in the Eastern, about thirty, in Minneota about two hundred, and in Marshall sixty to seventy. In all, the Icelanders thereabouts number approximately eight hundred. (1900)⁽¹²¹⁾

Settlement:

Settlement here started in 1875 when Gunnlaugur Petursson and his wife moved there by ox cart from Iowa county, Wisconsin, where they had taken up their residence in 1873. The journey

of five hundred miles was made in three weeks. Gunnlaugur Petursson "filed on" a homestead of 160 acres on the bank of the Yellow Medicine River, seven miles North-west of Minneota. He took up his residence there on July 4th. (122) In 1876, a gradual influx of Icelanders from Wisconsin, Iceland, and other places began.

The government land in Lyon County was soon all "filed on" by Icelanders, and other nationalities. In the spring of 1878, the settlement of Lincoln County began, and in 1897 that of Minneota.

Early Days:

The land in the Icelandic settlement in Minnesota is well suited to farming and the raising of livestock. The field crops include wheat, oats, barley, rye, corn and flax. Besides this, all the common garden truck is grown. The average crop of wheat, which is grown most extensively, is 12 to 15 bushel per acre. Livestock is another source of income, while large numbers of horses, cattle, sheep and swine are raised. All the first settlers obtained homesteads of 160 acres each, but many have increased their holdings considerably by purchase. The more recent arrivals have had to buy their farms, and now (1900) good land in this district sells for \$25.00 per acre. The land was formerly devoid of trees, but they have been planted extensively, and served the double purpose of beautifying the farms and providing shelter. The lack of trees was a serious handicap to building in the early days. Many lived in cellars (crudely thatched) roofed with lumber. Now the

buildings are generally of a very high order. The settlers had to purchase coal and wood from the very first.

In the towns of Marshall and Minnesota the Icelanders work as day labourers, carpenters, clerks, merchants, etc. (List of early merchants, professional men, etc. pages 60-64.) (Almanak 1900)

Social Activities: (123)

When the number of Icelanders in the new settlement had assumed considerable proportions they began to hold meetings to decide how they could best encourage education and high principles among themselves. In Lincoln County, 1878 a Society was formed for the following purposes:

To obtain books and papers, to procure a cemetery, and to further gatherings for Scripture reading on Sundays and Holy days. The idea of forming a Society was also taken up by the residents of Austurbyggd. There, two, independent societies were formed. One was called Framfarafelag, and was patterned along the same lines as that of a society which the Icelanders had begun in Milwaukee. Out of this society grew that which we now know as (Lestrarfelag) the Literary Society, which has for its object the promotion of reading and learning. This club built a hall in 1884, in which to hold meetings, though church services have also been held there for a long time. The other society formed itself into a church congregation. It was the only one which included other than Icelanders among its members.

Minnesota Congregation: (124)

The fall of 1878 meetings were held in both districts, Lincoln County and Austurbyggd, to form an Icelandic church. Representatives were chosen from both places to draw up by-laws for the church. In the following spring the Lincoln County church was organized in Vesturbyggd. Soon afterwards the Vesturheims Church was started in Austurbyggd. Later the St. Paul's church in Minnesota, and the Marshall church in Marshall were also formed. These congregations called themselves the Lutheran Icelandic Church of America, and possess fine churches now. The same minister has charge of them all.

The first Icelandic minister who visited the Icelanders in Minnesota was the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson. He came in the fall of 1879 and preached his first sermon there. In the spring of 1880, the Rev. Jon Bjarnason came to the settlement, preached, and carried out other ministerial work. The same year the members of the various congregations began to discuss the matter of securing a permanent pastor. On July 4th, 1880, a meeting was held in Vesturbyggd, and it was agreed that the Rev. Jon Bjarnason be asked to secure a minister, preferably from among the following four: Rev. Jon Halldorsson, Rev. Valdemar Briem, Rev. Thorvald Bjarnason and Rev. Jens Palsson. In the fall a meeting was held to discuss the reply received from Rev. Jon Bjarnason. He advised the congregation to send a call to the Rev. Hallder Briem, who was then

in charge of the congregation at Gimli. A resolution was passed in both districts, and the Rev. Halldor Briem was given the call. He came to Minnesota in the middle of April, 1881, and stayed for one year, thereafter going to Winnipeg. After one year there he returned to Iceland and the congregations were then without a minister for several years.

In the spring of 1886, Rev. Fridrik J. Bergmann visited the Icelanders in Minnesota. That same spring he graduated from the Lutheran College of Divinity at Philadelphia and was on his way to take up his duties among the Icelanders in North Dakota. He preached to the Icelanders in Minnesota, and did other ministerial work. The members of the congregations now began to reflect once more about securing a permanent pastor, and decided to send a call to Niels Steingrim Thorlaksson, who had been a fellow student of the Rev. Bergmann's, and who was pursuing his studies at Christiania(Oslo)in Norway. The call was sent, and Thorlaksson, at the earnest request of the congregations, accepted, came to America and was ordained by the Rev. Jon Bjarnason, who was at that time the head of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod. He assumed his duties in the fall of 1887 and remained for seven years, till the fall of 1894, when he went to Park River, North Dakota, and the Rev. Bjorn B. Jonsson(now guiding the destinies of the Icelandic Lutheran Church in Winnipeg)took charge of the congregations.

II. APPENDICES TO CHAPTER III.A NEW ICELAND, MANITOBA (125)

Translated "in toto" from article cited in reference 125.

Location:

This settlement is situated between 50 degrees, 30 minutes, and 51 degrees, 15 minutes North latitude, 96 degrees, 38 minutes, and 97 degrees, 10 minutes West longitude, on the West shore on Lake Winnipeg. It is forty-two miles in length from North to South and eleven miles in width approximately from East to West, where it is widest. It also includes two islands in Lake Winnipeg, North-east of the coast. One was called Big Island (Mikley), now Hecla Island on maps. It is eighteen miles long and six miles wide at its widest point. The other is Engy, a small island North-west of Big Island. Its area is only about 160 acres. When the Icelanders came first to New Iceland the settlement was included in the district of Keewatin, which was then in the North-West Territories. Some years later the boundaries of Manitoba were extended and New Iceland became part of Manitoba. New Iceland is but a small part of Gimli County, which is seventy miles long from North to South and twenty-three miles wide, at its widest point. From the beginning the Icelanders were granted sole rights of settlement in New Iceland, and it was only last year that this privilege was removed and the land thrown open for settlement to all nationalities.

In the summer of 1874, a little group came from Iceland to America. The majority were from the North of Iceland, and the remainder from other parts. There were nearly 250 in the party (385 -- correction in Almanak 1900), which sailed on the "St. Patrick", the first steamship which came to Iceland to bring settlers to Canada. This ship went straight from Iceland to Canada, and docked at Quebec on September 23rd, after a thirteen day voyage. The immigrants settled temporarily at Kimmount, Ontario, which is nearly sixty miles North of Toronto. During the winter all the men secured railway work, but after a short time that work ceased. The Icelanders at once, realized the precariousness of depending for a livelihood on day labour. Many of them began to contemplate taking up homesteads, but realized at the same time, that it would be impossible to form an all Icelandic settlement in Ontario. Other nationalities would settle in their midst, since there was not a suitably large stretch of good, unsettled land available.-----Here one feels compelled to mention a man to whom the Icelanders owe greater thanks than to any other Canadian. That man is John Taylor. This truly large-hearted individual came among the newcomers shortly after their arrival at Kimmount. He sympathized with them, for the majority were poor and could not speak English. He determined to interest himself in their affairs and to render what help he could. He spoke of their case to Lord Dufferin, who was Governor-General of Canada at that time, and suggested that the government should advance financial aid to enable the Icelanders to form a settlement. As a result

of his petition men were sent West to Manitoba to select a suitable site for the proposed settlement.

Only a few people in Ontario knew anything about Manitoba, and the majority were very much opposed to it. They said that the winters were unbearably cold, and the Indians were liable, without warning, to massacre the settlers. On May 30th, 1875, a large meeting was held to discuss the founding of a settlement, and to select representatives to visit Manitoba to choose a proper site. This land inspection committee numbered five, headed by John Taylor. They were: Sigtryggur Jonasson, Einar Jonasson, Skapti Arason, Kristjan Jonsson. On their way West they were joined by a sixth, Sigurdur Kristofersson from Milwaukee.

This committee set out on July 2nd, and arrived in Winnipeg on the 16th of the same month. It inspected the land now called New Iceland. Part of the committee returned to Ontario the latter part of August, but the remainder stayed in the West. They reported that the land was good and the fish abundant in Lake Winnipeg. The committee thought it inadvisable to locate in Manitoba, and may have been somewhat adversely influenced by the sight of the barren, grassless plain that had been left almost black as the result of a grasshopper plague, which had, that very summer, destroyed nearly all agriculture in the province. There has never been a recurrence of this misfortune.

On September 21st, 250 Icelanders set out from Kinmount for Manitoba. This party was augmented by others from different

parts of Ontario and from the U.S.A. There was no railroad at that time North of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. The party went by rail from Toronto to Sarnia, and thence from there by boat to Duluth, where they again entrained ~~through~~ Minnesota to the Red River. Boats conveyed them up that river to Winnipeg, and after a short stay there they went by water again, to their destination in New Iceland(Gimli). The trip from Winnipeg occupied considerable time because the flat boats that were used had to drift with the stream, and consequently moved very slowly. Similar barges are used to transport supplies and cord wood.

The Trip From Winnipeg To New Iceland.

Early in the morning of October 17th the flotilla of nine barges, fastened together in groups of three, set out from Winnipeg. Many of those that viewed the departure experienced misgivings as to the success of this venture which they regarded as ill-starred from the beginning. Some feared that the whole party would drown should a storm arise on Lake Winnipeg. There was only one steamship, the "Colville", belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, plying between Winnipeg and points on the Lake. Consequently the settlers had little choice as to transportation. On October 21st the "Colville" took the flotilla in tow at the mouth of the Red River, reaching Willow Point(Vidines) in New Iceland, the same day. The journey from Winnipeg had occupied five days. The time of arrival was 4:30 P.M., October 21st, 1875(the last day of summer, according to the Icelandic calendar).

The 23rd of October commenced the building of the first house at the place which was later called Gimli. The house was owned by Fridjon Fridriksson. It was neither large, nor painstakingly built. The walls were of round logs. The house had two rooms and no windows. Unhewn rails were used as rafters; the roof being thatched with hay and clay. The openings between the logs were plastered over inside and out with clay. The whole party now began to build. After a short time there sprang up a considerable hamlet of log houses, which were intended merely as temporary dwellings. These log cabins were practically all the same dimensions, namely 12 feet by 16 feet. The roof was practically flat. Many were floorless except for a few boards upon which the cook stove stood. The scanty lumber which they had, came from the barges, which had been disassembled in accordance with the original plan of using them for this purpose.

Several men set about immediately to look for homesteads in the vicinity of Gimli, and when they had made their selection began to build. All the land in New Iceland at that time, was unsurveyed, except township 18, in Range 4, East of the principal Meridian. In order that no two would build on the same homestead the Icelanders themselves, during freeze-up, measured the land bordering the lake from the township line North a distance of 12 miles to Arnes, as it is now called.

Early in January, 1876, practically all the lands bordering on the lake, which the Icelanders themselves had surveyed, had

been "filed on" and occupied. Several had by this time moved from Gimli to more suitable habitations, which they had erected on their homesteads. Others did varying amounts of work, clearing the land on their homestead entries so as not to forfeit their claim to it. As there was considerable advantage of position, competition was keen to secure confirmation of entry.

Several entered on lands in township 18 along the lake front, and this was considerably easier, since the survey had been made. The houses they built were small and unassuming. Due to the scarcity of lumber houses building made little advancement during the winter. Some began to build the house walls double and to fill the space between with clay, the object being to make the dwellings warmer but the opposite resulted. The inner wall was first constructed, then the outer, the space between being subsequently filled with clay. The roofs were made with a little ridge, so as to shed water from the centre, but all to no avail. The hay and clay-covered roofs leaked copiously in the summer as well as in the winter, as soon as the cold weather abated and the heat from within melted the snow on the roof. One window was the usual number for a house, but where there were two, one was situated in the gable and the other on the same wall as the door. These two windows correspond to what is now known as one window; ie, like one opening from the top or the bottom.

The task of building in the dead of winter was fraught with many hazards. The snow was two to three feet deep in the bush

where it had not drifted. It was necessary to clear away the snow where the house was to be built, and as one may readily infer, these houses received much cold from the floor while the stove was thawing the frozen ground. Log benches, placed against the house walls served as beds, until men began to make rough lumber with cross-cut saws. When this practice was begun building improved by leaps and bounds.

The winter proved both severe and long, the lake froze shortly after the arrival of the settlers and did not break up till May 24th. This particular autumn the lake frozen ever before the end of October, whereas it does not generally freeze until after the middle of November.

It had originally been intended that the whole group should move North to Icelandic River, now Riverton, and settle there, but due to the early arrival of winter the party was forced to abandon this plan. (List of first settlers - pages 30 - 32)

The Government Loan:

The Dominion Government, between 1875 and 1877 loaned to the Icelanders sums of money amounting to eighty thousand dollars. This money they used to pay their fare to Gimli, and provide themselves with food, together with clothing, implements, and other necessities of life. This loan proved a veritable godsend to the needy Icelanders during their first three trying years. It was given on the understanding that no repayment be exacted during the first five years, but it was all to be paid by 1887. ~~There~~ is no likelihood that the government expects repayment of this loan, for eleven years have now elapsed

since it fell due and practically nothing has been paid on it.

During 1875, John Taylor represented the government in the new settlement and watched over the needs and welfare of the people. He also administered the distribution of the government loan. In the fall of 1876 Sigtryggur Jonassen was made government representative, and he worked with John Taylor, purchasing necessities, settling the immigrants, and distributing the government loan. In the fall of 1876 the government granted \$10,500.00 to pay for chopping a road from North to South through the whole settlement. This road was completed in the winter of 1876-77 and is now the district's main highway. During the winter of 1876-7, the government surveyed nine townships, an area 36 miles in length, North and South, and 8 miles in width at its narrowest point.

It is quite safe to say that New Iceland would have been settled much more slowly had the government not rendered financial aid to the settlers. The first group was without means, and came just before the winter set in, a time when no work was to be had. Consequently, the loan proved practically the only means of subsistence during the first winter. It is not possible to say with any degree of certainty that there was any actual shortage of food during the first winter, but due to the nature of the season many did not have any too much to live on. All provisions and supplies had to be brought from Selkirk, and since there was no road cut through the forest, where the road now lies, the lake provided the only thoroughfare. Snow storms, extreme cold and the general impossibility of the way

contributed to delay the freighters longer than was usual. Then again, the oxen, one for each sleigh, which were most commonly used, were exasperatingly slow.

On account of their late arrival the settlers were unable to store up fish in the fall. When the lake was all frozen over several tried to fish through the ice, but this proved futile because the nets were too large meshed for the fish which they were most likely to catch. Some men had been so fortunate as to have small meshed nets, which they brought with them from Iceland and these men fished with some success. From them the others learned what kind of nets to use.

In the fall of 1877, the government loan was all used up and the settlers were unprepared to support themselves without assistance. During the winter starvation conditions prevailed in many homes. The Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, who came from North Dakota during the winter turned to the Norse Synod in the U.S.A. for aid. Several of the members of his flock sent a long letter to the Synod asking for help. This letter said that only a few out of 120 heads of families could provide for their dependents during the coming winter. Some statements made in the letter were open to question. It contained several pathetic statements about the conditions of poverty in the district, attributing it to the crop failure and the fact that the catch in the lake had failed, and further that the cows had given very little milk. As far as the fishing was concerned, the lack of success there can be set down to ignorance of the fishermen

of conditions prevailing on Lake Winnipeg. These fishermen went barely fifty fathoms from land and their nets brought up nothing but sticks and other refuse from the water.

This letter caused much controversy and ill-feeling, bringing to light that conditions existing in Rev. Pall Thorlaksson's parish were not worse than those in the other Icelandic districts. The Council made an investigation and found that conditions in the parish were not as bad as the letter had declared them to be. In spite of all this the Norwegians collected a relief fund of \$1,336.00 and sent it to Rev. P. Thorlaksson.

After Rev. Thorlaksson's arrival many of the settlers began to voice discontent with the place. He thought the land was badly chosen and practically useless for settlement, whereupon he urged the Icelanders to move to Dakota as quickly as possible.

Local Government in New Iceland:

The first settlers to New Iceland resided at Gimli over the winter, as was mentioned before. To supervise the distribution of the government loan, and other matters affecting the general welfare there was chosen, on January 4th, 1876, a committee of five men, called the Town Council (Baejarnefnd). It was composed of the following men: Olafur Olafsson, Fridjon Fridriksson, Jakob Jonsson, Johannes Magnusson and John Taylor, the representative of the Dominion government. This committee urged the settlers to move from Gimli to their farms.

After New Years, 1877, discussion about public affairs began. At this time the question of choosing a governing body for the settlement arose. Two meetings were called forthwith, one at Gimli and the other at Riverton. A committee of five was chosen to compose a draft of provisional laws regulating government by council. These laws were later compared and ratified by a majority vote at a general meeting held at Gimli, February 5th. This meeting was attended by settlers from all the districts. In accordance with these laws, the whole settlement, called Vatnsthing, was divided into districts called Willow Point(Vidines), Arnes, Riverton(Fljetabyggd), and Big Island, Hecla district(Mikley) (See page 36, Almanak 1899 for names of district council presidents.) As provided by these laws, nominations and elections were held in all the districts on the 14th of the same month. A council of five was elected in each district, and it was called the district council. These councils met at Sandy Bar, one of the village sites in New Iceland, to elect, among other matters, a president and vice-president to preside over matters pertaining to the four settlements. The body assisting them, composed of the four district council presidents, was called Thingrad. The president, or reeve chosen, was Sigtryggur Jonasson, and the vice-president, Fridjon Fridriksson. The council considered many problems of general interest to the whole settlement. Matters that needed the sanction of the whole community were referred to the separate districts for ratification. Among the many laws passed by the central council were the following:

1. That every male adult, 21 years of age should do two days road work per year, or pay \$2.00.

2. Widows and orphans were to receive adequate support.

3. Widows, with families dependent on them, could file on homesteads and were to receive aid in working them.

4. A committee of five was to be chosen in each district to supervise sanitation and the general welfare of the homes, also to see that dwellings were built with a view to fire prevention.

NOTE: The laws governing New Iceland were in eighteen sections. -- See Framfari, 1. 8. (New Iceland's first newspaper)

These laws were adopted at a meeting held at Sandy Bar January 11th, 1878.

In 1883 New Iceland received a Municipal Charter, and was named the Municipality of Gimli, and at the same time the County of Gimli. This charter was not put into operation until the year 1887. In that year the first Municipal Council was elected, largely through the efforts of Sigtryggur Jonasson.

Composition of the First Council:

Reeve: Johann Briem

Council Members: Thorgrimur Jonsson, Johannes Helgason,

Gudlaugur Magnusson and Kristjan Kjernested.

The Council chose Johannes Magnusson as the assessor, and Gudni Thorsteinsson secretary-treasurer, a position which he held till 1899.

The Smallpox Epidemic:

During the winter of 1875-6, there was considerable sickness in the settlement, including scurvy, and several deaths resulted. During the following autumn, in September, a devastating and loathsome disease made its appearance, and raged throughout almost the entire settlement. At first the Icelanders did not recognize this illness, which turned out to be Smallpox. This disease did not appear in its most malignant form since it did not affect two-thirds of the people in the homes which it visited. It disappeared after six months, having carried off 102 Icelanders, mostly young people and children.

The Lt.-Governor of Manitoba, who at that time was the governor of Keewatin, placed the settlement under quarantine by stationing a cordon of soldiers between New Iceland and Manitoba. This was done on November 27th, 1876, the guard being fifteen miles South of the settlement at Nettly Lake. People who had not contracted the disease were allowed to travel from New Iceland to Manitoba on the following conditions:

That they remain at the quarantine depot under observation for fifteen days. That they change their clothes completely, and take a bath. The clothes were supplied free by the government, and some people made the journey in their worst rags for the purpose of the exchange. Those who had recovered from the disease were allowed to make the journey after taking a bath and changing into new clothes. Letters from the settlement were disinfected before being allowed to proceed to their destination.

A doctor was sent to the settlement by the Dominion Government in December. At about the same time two doctors were sent by the Provincial government. These three doctors came for the purpose of looking into the health conditions in the settlement and to suppress the smallpox. Prior to the arrival of the doctors, a hospital was prepared at Gimli, a government warehouse being used for the purpose. Here many of the settlers received better treatment than could have been given them in their homes. The doctors remained on duty approximately three or four months, and were replaced by a fourth. The Provincial government, together with its commissioners, Taylor and Jonasson, had all the dwellings in the settlement disinfected with lime water and sulphur fumes when the epidemic had run its course. This took place between the 8th and 30th of June. On July 20th the quarantine was lifted, having lasted 228 days.

This smallpox epidemic affected the morale of the people. They felt themselves to be too isolated to receive quickly proper medical attention in time of need, and that the detached situation of the settlement might prove dangerous under another similar epidemic. This gave rise to considerable dissatisfaction with the place, but this discontent, though fairly widespread, was not deep-rooted, and soon subsided.

Trade was very difficult, and it was in fact mainly the government loan that kept the settlers alive, though this was slightly augmented by the catch of fish and the small quantities of vegetables raised in the district. Again, only those

who arrived in the fall of 1875 had any gardens under cultivation. The large party, (1200) in two groups, that arrived in the summer of 1876, consequently fared worse than the earlier arrivals. There was a young man in the second group who had contracted smallpox in Quebec, according to report, and had brought the disease to New Iceland.

It is quite safe to assert that the smallpox period is the most trying and difficult which New Iceland has ever experienced. The sufferings of the sick, the difficulties of properly attending to them, the ignorance of the people in an isolated quarter of a foreign land, the poverty and homesickness, all contributed to make life in New Iceland dreary and arduous at first.

Migration From New Iceland:

In May, 1878, five men left New Iceland and made their way South to Dakota to inspect the surrounding country and take up homesteads. From this time on large numbers of Icelanders pulled up stakes in New Iceland and settled in Dakota.

In the spring of 1881, the Icelanders began to settle in Argyle. From the time when the first party went to Dakota, 1878, a steady stream of people left New Iceland going to Argyle and Winnipeg. This movement continued till 1886, or for a period of eight years.

In 1886 Icelanders from Winnipeg and New Iceland began to settle in Thingvalla, a colony around Charchbridge, Sask. Most of these went from Winnipeg. When the migration ceased there were only about fifty families in the whole of New

Iceland. These were distributed as follows: twelve in Willow Point district, five in Arnes district, twenty-five in Riverton district and about eight or ten on Hecla Island. Before the exodus began it is estimated that there were about four hundred families in New Iceland.

Churches:

At one of the council meetings shortly after the Council in New Iceland was formed, the question of securing a minister and of erecting suitable churches or schoolhouses, which might be used as churches for the time being, arose. The residents of Riverton held a meeting on April 27th or 28th, 1877. The meeting decided to secure a minister and to take up contributions towards his salary. It was also decided to build churches when and where they were needed. In the fall of 1876 Rev. Pall Thorlaksson had offered his services and said that he did not expect any salary at first. The Rev. Pall Thorlaksson renewed this offer several times, but nothing was done. As time went on men began to doubt that the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson would come. He was at that time in charge of a Norwegian congregation in Wisconsin, U.S.A., belonging to the Norse Lutheran Synod. The Icelanders knew little about that church, save that it was Lutheran in name and somewhat foreign in spirit and doctrine. The decision arrived at was that the Icelanders form a church which would not be affiliated with any other church body in North America.

At the meeting aforesaid, a committee was chosen to secure a preacher and to discuss the matter of holding services con-

jointly with the people of other districts, likewise to see that churches were built and to refuse with thanks Rev. Pall Thorlaksson's offer of his services. Similar meetings held in the other districts disclosed that divergent views existed that made agreement impossible. The residents of Hecla Island and the majority of those in Willow Point district followed the lead of the people of Riverton. Some people in Willow Point district, together with those in Arnes saw no reason to refuse Rev. Thorlaksson's offer. Consequently the settlement divided on this question. Because of this disagreement only enough promises of support could be obtained to pay the salary of one minister and the majority wished to send a call either to the Rev. Jon Bjarnason or to Halldor Briem, a theological student. The first resided in Minneapolis, while the latter lived there only in the winter time. The first group that moved to New Iceland had, the winter before, requested Rev. Jon Bjarnason to take up ministerial work among them.

During the middle of July, 1877, the Rev. Jon Bjarnason visited the settlement, preached there, and did other ministerial work. He was well pleased, both with the country and the people, and voiced a hope that he might receive the call when the settlers felt the need of a pastor.

Churches were organized, provisional church laws were drawn up, and a call was sent to the Rev. Jon Bjarnason. The letter, dated Sept. 5th, said that 130 families had indicated

their willingness to become members of the new church. In reply the Rev. Jon Bjarnason accepted the call and said that he would set out for New Iceland about the middle of October. He arrived at Gimli the 8th day of November, and commenced his duties.

It was largely through the efforts of the new minister that a school for children was started at Gimli. This school continued open all winter. The pastor's wife, Lara Bjarnason, was the teacher. The subjects taught were reading, religious teaching, writing, arithmetic, geography, English and singing. Tuition was free. A nother school was started at Riverton.

The new church was named the Icelandic Lutheran Church of America (Hid luterska Kirkjufelag Islendinga i Vesturheimi). The church by-laws, ten in number, are to be found in Framfari (1. 16) The church included five congregations: Braedrasofnud, at Riverton; Breiduvikursofnud, at Hnausa; Baejarsofnud, Gimli and neighborhood; Steinkirkjusofnud, in the South of the Willow Point district, at Husavik.

In the spring of 1880, the Rev. Jon Bjarnason resigned his pastership and made preparations to return to Iceland. Before leaving he ordained, on March 31st, Halldor Briem, who then succeeded him as pastor. In 1881 the Rev. Halldor Briem resigned and went to Minnesota.

On October 19th, 1877, Rev. Pall Thorlakason came to New Iceland in response to a request from 120 families there. He had promised to become their pastor, but only for the winter

season, because he had not severed connections with his congregation in Wisconsin. He did not know what to expect, inasmuch as he had not received a formal call from those who had previously asked him to come.

Shortly after Rev. Pall Thorlaksson's arrival a church, which called itself The Icelandic Lutheran Church of New Iceland (Hinn íslenski luterski sófnudur í Nýja Íslandi), was formed. The church laws were in twenty-one sections and are to be found in Framfari (1. 16). This church was made up of three congregations: Vidalsins congregation, in Willow Point district; Hallgrims congregation in the Southern part of the Arnes district, and Gudbrands congregation in the Northern part of Arnes district, along with several members of this church who resided in the district of Riverton. On April 27th, Rev. Pall Thorlaksson went back to Wisconsin, but returned to New Iceland the following fall. In the meantime, many of his flock had moved to Dakota. In the spring of 1879, he himself, left New Iceland.

On the 17th and 18th of March Rev. Pall Thorlaksson and Rev. Jon Bjarnason held a largely attended meeting to settle religious disputes, which had arisen out of the teachings of the Norwegian Synod. These vexatious points were fully discussed to the satisfaction of all. It was found that the ministers differed on many minor questions but no fundamental cleavage was detected.

Rev. Magnus J. Skaptason came from Iceland to the settlement during the summer of 1887. He came to do ministerial work among the settlers, who, at that time, had been without a

pastor for many years. He joined the Lutheran Church of America to which his new congregations belonged. In 1891, Rev. Magnus Skaptason transferred his allegiance to the Unitarian Church. Many of his flock followed his lead and still belong to that church. During the summer of 1895 Rev. Magnus Skaptason moved to Winnipeg.

In the latter part of July, 1895, Rev. Oddur V. Gislason came to New Iceland, having previously offered his services to the people there. In response to this offer Rev. P. J. Bergmann, acting for the Synod, sent him a call to Braedra congregation at Riverton. Since that time he has ministered to that congregation, and to other small charges in New Iceland and elsewhere.

Newspapers in New Iceland:

The suggestion that an Icelandic paper be started in New Iceland was first discussed at a meeting held in Gimli in January, 1877, when it was decided that the best plan would be to form a company to buy a press and other essentials. Some men undertook to canvass the district to find out how many would be willing to purchase shares. These men went into all the details of the plan at a meeting held in Gimli, on February 5th. Sufficient premises had then been secured to warrant the meeting forming a company and choosing an executive. Half of the promised capital was requested at once.

The executive lost no time ordering the press, which arrived the following summer in the month of June. This long delay between the order and delivery of the press was due to the type foundries not having the extra letters in the Icelandic

alphabet. Consequently moulds had to be made and the letters cast. The Rev. Jon Bjarnason, who was then in Minneapolis attended to this matter. An executive, consisting of Sigtryggur Jonasson, Fridjon Fridriksson and Johann Briem was chosen. The company was called "The New Iceland Printing Company". It was resolved to name the new paper "Framfari". The first edition of the paper appeared at Riverton on September 10th, 1877, the last edition on January 30th, 1880. Besides this one extra edition came out on April 10th of the same year. The originators of this commendable enterprise were Sigtryggur Jonasson, Fridjon Fridriksson and Johann Briem. These three owned most of the shares in the company. Besides these, there were many other smaller shareholders, all of whom lost in the venture. The company was capitalized for \$1,000.00. Sigtryggur Jonasson was editor for the first eight editions, and Halldor Briem then took over his position and held it during the life of the paper. Disputes and divisions into factions in New Iceland, arising out of the administration of the settlement, religion and all possible matters were largely responsible for ruining both the paper and the settlement. In any event, the Icelanders were not numerous enough to support a newspaper. Thus passed the first newspaper which the Icelanders established on this side of the Atlantic. It was just a little more than three years old when the last edition appeared. It printed 36 editions per year, and subscribers paid \$2.00 per year.

In January 1893, the first edition of the paper "Dagsbrun" appeared. Rev. Magnus J. Skaptason was the editor and distributor. This paper was Unitarian in outlook. It was

published in the print shop of Gisli Tomasson (G.M. Thompson) at Gimli. In 1896 it was discontinued.

During the winter of 1896, Gisli Tomasson published a timarit "Svava" in the print shop which he had started at Gimli during the winter of 1891. The timarit (periodical) was a monthly publication. The yearly subscription cost \$1.00. In 1904 the publication was discontinued.

In December, 1898, the first edition of "Bergmalid" appeared. It was printed in the same place as the Svava, and appeared three times a month. The yearly subscription cost \$1.00. Gisli Tomasson and Gudni Thorsteinsen acted as joint editors. In 1901 it was discontinued.

Other publications were: "Baldur", 1903-1910; "My Dagsbrun" 1904-1906; and "Gimlungur", 1910-1911.

In conclusion it may be said that, during the first winter in New Iceland, a written paper was distributed. It was called "Nyi Thjodolfur". The editor was Jon Gudmundsson (now in Argyle). Only three numbers appeared. Jonas Stefansson, at Gimli, is probably the only person who now possesses these three editions.

Icelandic Business Undertakings:

In the following few words the largest business ventures which in any way affected the Icelanders in New Iceland will be sketched:

In the fall of 1879 Sigtryggur Jonasson and Fridjon Fridriksson purchased the steamship "Victoria" for \$4,000.00. This boat they used on the Red River and Lake Winnipeg for

several years. During the winter of 1879, Arni Fridriksson joined the company, which then built two large barges. In the spring of 1881 this company built a large sawmill at Riverton. The sawmill remained there for several years and then it was moved to the East side of the Lake. At about the time when this company bought the steamship the movement of the Icelanders away from New Iceland was at its height. Since this boat and the sawmill provided work for many Icelanders men began to move to New Iceland again. The fact that \$30,000.00 was paid in wages by the company, between the time it purchased the boat and the fall of 1884, shows how considerable was the employment provided. Most of this money was paid to Icelanders. It may be truthfully said that it was due to the activities of the company and the work which it provided that New Iceland, particularly Riverton, did not become entirely depopulated.

In the spring of 1884 the partners, Sigtryggur Jonasson and Fridjon Fridriksson entered upon the large undertaking of building, by themselves, at Riverton, the steamship "Aurora". The Aurora was a large boat more than 120 feet long. The hull was not fully completed until a year later. The engines were installed at Selkirk during the summer of 1886. The total cost of the Aurora, when completed, amounted to \$22,000.00. Stefan Jonsson and his son Kjartan, and Jon Jonsson built, on Big Island during the winter of 1894-5, the steamship "Ida", which they used on Lake Winnipeg for several years.

In the spring of 1893, Gestur Oddleifsson, in partnership with an Englishman established a sawmill at Gimli. During the

summer this mill was moved to Riverton. Kristjan Finnsson now owns this mill.

In the spring of 1898, the brothers Stefan and Johannes Sigurdsson had the steamship "Lady of the Lake" built at Selkirk at a cost of about \$15,000.00. The workmanship and the materials were of the very finest. This boat is still in use on Lake Winnipeg.

In the year 1885, a company for the canning of fish was organized at Gimli. The inhabitants of Willow Point formed this company, built the cannery and bought the machinery. Thorarinn Thoraransen, an experienced canner managed the undertaking. This company failed altogether, the reason being that the bones of the fish intended for canning were too hard.

During the summer of 1896 Sveinn Thorvaldsson and Johann P. Solmundsson established a creamery at Gimli. The following summer Sveinn moved to Riverton and started a creamery there.

Lord Dufferin's Visit to New Iceland?

During the summer of 1877 Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, visited Manitoba. After having visited various parts of the Province he honored the Icelanders in New Iceland by a personal visit. He arrived at Gimli early in the morning of September 14th. There he was welcomed with open arms, a speaking platform was constructed and the English and Danish flags were raised.

When Lord Dufferin had taken his place on the platform Fridjon Fridriksson read him an address on behalf of the Icelanders. The Governor-General, at the conclusion of the

address, replied with a splendid speech. (Both the address and the speech are printed in the third edition of Framfari, first year.)

The Governor-General in his speech evinced his faith in the indomitable, stout-hearted and persevering Icelandic nation. The story of the Icelanders' Norse ancestors, he said, vindicated their claim to the possession of these qualities. The characteristics of that noble race were: diligence, dependability, together with enduring and never-failing patience. Continuing he said: "I have pledged my personal credit to my Canadian friends on the successful development of your settlement."

About one hundred people were assembled. Among these there was one girl dressed in the Icelandic national costume. Lord Dufferin remarked that the costume was becoming, and said that the Icelandic women should never discard it. The Governor-General had planned to go North to Riverton, but this plan he had to forego because the captain of the steamship "Colville" on which he travelled, said that he did not have sufficient coal for the journey.

On the 17th of the same month, two government ministers, Mills and Pelletier, visited the settlement. They arrived at Gimli in the evening. Mr. Taylor and a large number of Icelanders met them at the landing place and bade them welcome to New Iceland. The ministers began, without delay, to inspect Gimli and the neighborhood. They evinced their satisfaction at finding everything in a better condition than they had expected. The ministers beheld an example of diligence and courage. Many people had built good houses and had cleared considerable land

in spite of various misfortunes such as the smallpox, etc. They had expected to find an unenergetic and non-progressive people where the Icelanders were. The heads of the Hudson's Bay Company and others, had given them this impression. These men were hostile to the Icelanders and had spoken ill of them. The journey of the ministers to New Iceland was made so that they could see conditions for themselves and not be forced to accept the reports of others. Before their departure they said that they were very pleased with conditions, and their remarks showed that they had every hope for the prosperity of the settlement and were entirely in harmony with the sentiments voiced by the Governor-General a few days before.

However, the prophecy of these distinguished men has not been entirely fulfilled. New Iceland has not reached the rung in the ladder of progress which they predicted it would attain. The fortitude and patience of the Icelanders seemed to be too crippled to enable them to establish a prosperous settlement in a few years. They had become accustomed to let nature, almost unassisted, take its course and to merely accept what it and the land gave. There was forest to be cleared, swamps to be drained, and bad roads to be repaired. These tasks appeared to increase, rather than decrease in difficulty, in spite of the passage of time.

New Iceland's First Merchants:

Fridjen Fridriksson, now situated at Glenboro, started a store at Gimli during the winter of 1876-7. The following summer

his business increased greatly due to the large number of new immigrants. At about the same time Sigurdur Myrdal, now in Victoria, B.C., started a small store at Riverton. Samsen Bjarnasson, now in Dakota, opened a store at Arnes. During the summer months he moved his wares to a sailboat and trades extensively throughout the new settlement, especially at Riverton. The prices of some of his stock in the fall of 1878 were as follows: One sack of XXXX flour, \$3.35; one pound of coffee, 35¢; one pound of sugar 16¢; one barrel of salt \$5.00; one gallon of coal oil 60¢; one whitefish 10¢ to 11¢ each.

Johannes Kristjansson, now in Utah, had a little store at Riverton and later at Arnes. Since then many people have started stores in New Iceland.

Address Read to Lord Dufferin on the Occasion of His Visit to
New Iceland, on September 14th, 1877. (126)

"May it please your Excellency: It is with feelings of great pleasure and thankfulness that the Icelanders of this Colony are now assembled to welcome your Excellency and Lady Dufferin to our newly-made settlement.

"Beneath the folds of our adopted country, we gladly realize the fact that we are here today, as British subjects to do honor to the chosen representative of the British Queen, yet we do not wish to forget that as Icelanders we are also privileged to approach a friend of our native land, whose name is highly esteemed by many in Iceland. While we heartily desire to emphasize and prolong the British cheer - "God Save the Queen", we would also add - and the friend of Old Iceland.

"It is not yet two years since the first party of our people came to this new country. It was no cheerful prospect like the present one that lay before them as they landed in an unexplored and almost unknown land, to prepare for the rigours of a long winter, whose first snows were already on the ground. Hard has been the struggle since that day, with privations, with sickness, with wasted toil, and over-wet seasons, destroying the crops. And latterly the bitter struggle with pestilence, greatly aggravated by a rigorous quarantine, prolonged so far beyond reasonable bounds.

"But today, under more favorable circumstances, the Icelanders rejoice in the thought that the dark day of adversity has at length passed away, and that a brighter time has come, wherein they are able to realize the advantages of their position here in New Iceland, so much greater than those they possessed at home.

"We gratefully acknowledge the help extended to us by the government of Canada in the form of a loan, which we trust to repay faithfully with interest. While it is much to be regretted that unfavorable circumstances have prevented more extensive fields to be cultivated, we are yet thankful for the prospects of a good crop from excellent soil. We greatly prize the rich pasturage and the abundant supply of hay for our stock, those true sources of future wealth. We could not but rejoice in the plentiful supply of good fish from the waters of this Lake Winnipeg. With an inexhaustible stock of wood for building, fencing and fuel, we are better able to contend with the

vigorous climate. And the possession of a good winter road, safely sheltered in the forest secures to us great facilities for intercommunication.

"We gladly accept our new position as British subjects, with all the rights and privileges connected therewith. As such we desire to be placed in the possession of these rights, being resolved to uphold and preserve them. In the maintenance of public order, and in the defence of our country, we are ready to partake, and faithfully to do that duty which "England expects of every man".

"In conclusion, we wish your Excellency and Lady Dufferin, on this occasion, a pleasant trip over the Northern lake, a lake almost unknown at present, except by name, but likely to become a great centre of commercial enterprise, when the fertile lands of the great North West Territory of Canada are fully settled.

"That your Excellency may enjoy prosperity, happiness and length of days is the prayer of your Excellency's most obedient, humble servants."

Lord Dufferin's Reply:(127)

"Men and Women of Iceland, now citizens of Canada, and fellow subjects of Her Majesty, the Queen:

"When it was my good fortune, twenty years ago, to visit your Island, I never thought that the day would come when I should be called upon as the representative of the British Crown to receive you in this country, but the opportunities I have thus had of becoming acquainted with your dramatic history, with your picturesque literature, and the kindness I have

experienced at the hands of your countrymen, now enable me, with the greater cordiality, to bid you welcome. I have learned with extreme sorrow of the terrible trials to which you have been exposed, so soon after your arrival, by the unexpected ravages of a terrible epidemic. Such a visitation was well calculated to damp your spirits and to benumb your energies, aggravating as it did those inevitable hardships which attend the first efforts of all settlers to establish themselves in a new land. The precautions which the local government was reluctantly compelled to take to prevent the spreading of the contagion through the province must also have been both galling and disadvantageous, but I trust that the discouragements which attended your advent among us have now forever passed away and that you are fairly embarked on a career of happiness and prosperity. Indeed, I understand that there is not one amongst you, who is not perfectly content with his new lot, and fully satisfied that the change which has taken place in his destiny is for the better.

"During a hasty visit like the present I cannot pretend to acquire more than a superficial insight into your condition, but so far as I have observed, things appear to be going sufficiently well with you. The homesteads I have visited seem well-built and commodious, and are certainly far superior to any of the farm houses I remember in Iceland, while the gardens and little clearings which have begun to surround them show that you have already tapped an inexhaustible store of wealth in the rich, alluvial soil on which we stand. The three arts most necessary to a Canadian colonist are the felling of timber, the plowing of

land, and the construction of highways; but as in your own country, none of you had ever seen a tree, a cornfield or a road, it is not to be expected that you should immediately exhibit any expertness in these accomplishments, but practice and experience will soon make you masters of all three, for you possess in a far greater degree than is probably imagined, that which is the essence and foundation of all superiority -- intelligence, education and intellectual activity. In fact, I have not entered a single hut or cottage in the settlement which did not contain, no matter how bare or scanty its furniture, a library of twenty or thirty volumes, and I am informed that there is scarcely a child among you who cannot read and write.

"Secluded as you have been for hundreds of years from all contact with the civilization of Europe, you may in many respects be a little rusty and behind the rest of the world; nor perhaps have the conditions under which you used to live at home - when months have to be spent in the enforced idleness of a sunless winter - accustomed you to those habits of continued and unflagging industry which you will find necessary to your new existence; but in our brighter, drier and more exhilarating climate you will become animated with fresh vitality and your continually expanding prosperity will encourage you year by year to still greater exertions.

"Beneath the genial influences of the fresh young world to which you have come, the dormant capacities of your race, which adverse climatic and geographical conditions may have

somewhat stunted and often numbed, will bud and burgeon forth in all its pristine exuberance, as germs which have been for centuries buried beneath the pyramids and catacombs of Egypt are said to excel in the exuberance and succulence of their growth the corn seeds of last year's harvest. But as sun and air, and light are necessary to produce the miracle, so it will be necessary for you to profit as much as possible by the example and by the intercourse of your more knowledgeable neighbors.

"I have learned with great satisfaction that numbers of your young women have entered the households of various Canadian families, where they will not only acquire the English language, which it is most desirable you should all know, and which they can teach their brothers and sisters, and -- I trust I may add, in course of time, their children -- but will also learn those lessons of domestic economy and house-wifely neat-handedness which are so necessary to the well being, health and cheerfulness of our homes. I am also happy to be able to add that I have received the best accounts from a great number of people of the good conduct, handiness and docility of these young Ingebergs, Ragnhildas, Thoras and Gudruns, who I trust will do credit to the epical ancestresses from whom they have inherited their names. Many of the homes I have visited today have evident signs in their airiness, neatness and well-ordered appearance of possessing a housewife who had already profited from her contact with the outer world. And while I am on this subject there is one practical hint which I shall venture to make to you. Every single house I visited today, many of them being mere temporary huts, with at the most two small chambers, was

furnished with a large close iron cooking stove, evidently used not merely for cooking purposes, but also for heating the habitation. I believe that this arrangement is anything but desirable, and that at all events, in those houses where a separate kitchen cannot be obtained, an open fire place should be introduced. I am quite certain that if I were to come among you in winter I should find those stoves in full operation, and every crevice in your shanties sealed up from the outer air. Now you are surrounded by an inexhaustible supply of the best possible fuel, which can be obtained with comparatively little labor, and consequently, economy of coal, which is their chief recommendation, need not drive you to an excessive use of those unwholesome appliances. Our winter air, though sufficiently keen is healthy and bracing, and a patent incentive to physical exertion, whereas the mephitic vapors of an overheated, closely packed chamber, paralyze our physical, as well as our mental activities. A constitution nursed upon the oxygen of our bright winter atmosphere makes its owner feel as though he could toss about the pine trees in his glee, whereas to the sluggard simmering over his stove it is a horror and a nameless hardship to put his nose outdoors. I need not tell you that in a country like this the one virtue pre-eminently necessary to every man is self reliance, energy and a determination to conquer an independent living for himself, his wife and children by the unassisted strength of his own right arm. Unless each member of the settlement is possessed and dominated by this feeling there can be no salvation for anyone.

"But why need I speak to Icelanders - to you men and

women of the grand old Norse race, of the necessity of patience under hardship, courage in the face of danger, dogged determination in the face of difficulties. The annals of your country are bright with the records of your forefathers' noble endurance. The sons and daughters of the men and women who crossed the Arctic Ocean in open boats and preferred to make their homes among the snows and cinders of a volcano rather than enjoy peace and plenty under iron sway of a despot, may afford to smile at anyone who talks to them of hardship or rough living beneath the pleasant shade of the murmuring branches and beside the laughing ripples of yonder shining lake. The change now taking place in your fortunes is the very converse of that which befell your forefathers. They fled from their pleasant homes and golden corn fields into a howling wilderness of storm and darkness, ice and lava, but you I am welcoming to the healthiest climate on the continent, and to a soil of unexampled fertility, which a little honest industry on your part will soon turn into a garden of plenty. Nor do we forget that no race has a better right to come among us than yourselves, for it is probably to the hardihood of the Icelandic navigators that the world is indebted for the discovery of this continent. Had not Columbus visited your Island and discovered in your records a practical and absolute confirmation of his own brilliant speculations in regard to the existence of a western land, it is possible he might never have had the enterprise to tempt the unknown Atlantic. Again I welcome you to this country -- a country in which you will find

yourselves freemen, serving no overlord, and being no man's men but your own; each master of his own farm, like the Udalmen and "Bonders" of old days; and remember that in coming among us you will find yourselves associated with a race both kindly hearted and cognate to your own. Nor in becoming Englishmen and subjects of Queen Victoria need you forget your own time-honored customs or the picturesque annals of your forefathers.

"On the contrary, I trust you will continue to cherish for all time the heart stirring literature of your nation, and that from generation to generation your little ones will continue to learn in your ancient Sagas that industry, energy, fortitude, perseverance and stubborn endurance have ever been the characteristics of the noble Icelandic race. I have pledged my personal credit to my Canadian friends on the successful development of your settlement. My warmest and most affectionate sympathies attend you, and I have not the slightest misgiving but that in spite of your enterprise being conducted under, what of necessity, are somewhat disadvantageous conditions, not only will your future prove bright and prosperous, but that it will be universally acknowledged that a more valuable accession to the intelligence, patriotism, loyalty, industry and strength of the country has ever been introduced into the Dominion."

B ICELANDERS IN WINNIPEG: (128)

In 1875 Winnipeg was but a little town. Few people would have thought then that it would become the large and beautiful city which it now is. Its location is most advantageous, right in the centre of Canada, on the fertile plains of Manitoba, a suitable place for the trade from the East to stop before it branches out into the great North-west. In 1875 the name possessed little significance for the Icelanders, but after that year the name Winnipeg is woven into the history of the Icelanders in America, and it is sincerely to be hoped that it will come to have a deeper meaning.

When the first party of Icelanders, bound for New Iceland, arrived in Winnipeg, in October, 1875, a few of them remained in that city during the winter. They were mainly girls who secured work as domestics.

By reason of the scarcity conditions which prevailed in New Iceland, a few Icelanders, men and women, came to Winnipeg during the summer of 1876 to look for work.

During the summer of 1876 the largest party of settlers, 1200 in number, which had left Iceland up to this time, came direct to Winnipeg. Although many settled there the majority went to New Iceland. Those who remained, mainly girls, accepted positions in Canadian homes. They took this course partly from necessity, and partly to learn the English language and English ways. These girls were paid from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per month, and this was considered good when compared with the pay for similar work in Iceland. A few who knew a little English obtained \$8.00 per month. As a result of this

work many of the Icelandic girls became familiar with the housekeeping ways and language of their English employers.

Day labor was scarce, the commonest work was unloading boats on the Red River. This work was very hard, and was considered the worst obtainable. The pay was 20¢ per hour. An opportunity to earn a few dollars was not to be despised, however, and this sort of employment was accepted whenever offered. Sometimes the men obtained work on the boats which plied the Red River between Winnipeg and Fisher's Landing, in Dakota. Few there were who ever made more than one journey. Most of the regular boat crews had worked on boats on the Mississippi, and had been accustomed to slave labor. The Icelanders found them cruel and heartless taskmasters. Pay on the boats was \$40.00 per month.

Besides this, there was some railroad work to be had. The transcontinental railway was being built East from Selkirk, about the time when the greatest number of Icelanders came to Manitoba. The following year it was being built from Selkirk to St. Boniface. The pay was 15¢ per hour for a ten hour day. The Icelanders were, as we may well imagine, unaccustomed to working with a shovel from morning till night. Many of them felt that they could not endure such arduous labor. The changed food and climate doubtless had a good effect, for, as the men became more experienced complaints ceased. It was not long before the Icelanders of both sexes, who worked for others, realized that they must learn and adopt Canadian customs if they were to prosper.

First Homes:

The first Icelandic homes in Winnipeg were shanties built down beside the Red River. Those who were absolutely destitute had to sleep in the open. These people were without the barest necessities of life. Firewood, for example, they had none, except driftwood from the river. The land on which these homes were built belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company. As a matter of fact the Icelanders had no right to be there at all. Those in authority realized how poor they were and did not have the heart to drive them away. Some time later, however, they were requested to leave.

The Smallpox Quarantine is Lifted:

Relatively few Icelanders settled permanently in Winnipeg before the summer of 1877. Up to that time most of them made their homes in New Iceland. During the winter of 1876-7 New Iceland experienced a smallpox epidemic. In the spring, when the quarantine was lifted, many men and women came to Winnipeg to secure work. The hardships in New Iceland had so discouraged many that they had decided to leave that place permanently.

South of the settlement (New Iceland) were situated the tents of the quarantine officers. Their duty was to prevent the spread of the smallpox. In one of the tents the travellers from New Iceland to Winnipeg removed their clothes, which were then burned, in another tent they were thoroughly scrubbed, and in a third tent they were given new wearing apparel, trousers, socks, shoes, vest, but no coat. When they arrived in Winnipeg they were shunned by the people there. Hungry, and neglected, many were compelled to beg for food. Sometimes people were afraid to approach closely enough to them to

render any assistance. Occasionally food was placed where they could conveniently reach it. Although large numbers of Icelanders came to Winnipeg during the summer, and many stayed there permanently, yet some went back to New Iceland to their friends and relatives for the winter.

The First Icelandic Society in Winnipeg:

On September 6th, 1877, an Icelandic Society was formed in Winnipeg. The objects of this society, as laid down in its by-laws were: ⁽¹²⁸⁾ To strengthen and guard the honor of the Icelandic people; to maintain and revive among Icelanders that freedom of mind which, during all ages has been their outstanding characteristic. The idea of forming an Icelandic Society grew out of a meeting held in Milwaukee in 1874, when the Icelanders there celebrated the thousandth anniversary of the settlement of Iceland. At that celebration an Icelandic society was formed, but it soon broke up. Jon Thordarson had been a member of the Milwaukee society. At this time he was residing in Winnipeg. Thinking that the time was opportune he suggested that the Icelanders in Winnipeg form a society along the same lines as the one which had been formed in Milwaukee. This suggestion was acted upon, and Jon Thordarson became the society's first president. The annual membership fee was 50¢. Religious services were held by the society, and a Sunday School was added for children and young people. The society desired to keep in touch with the Icelanders in America, and to secure information about their whereabouts and progress.

In its meetings the Icelandic society followed the regular procedure used at English meetings. The members copied and practiced the English ways of speaking. Freedom of speech was the order of the day. All were equal. During this period many small debating societies were formed.

In the fall of 1878 the Icelandic society changed its name to the Icelandic National Society.⁽¹²⁹⁾ At a meeting held on October 1, 1878, it was decided to use the funds of the society, amounting to \$30.00, to buy shares in the Icelandic paper "Framfari", which was located at Riverton.

In 1881 the Icelandic National Society was renamed the "Framfarafelag Islendinga i Vesturheimi".⁽¹³⁰⁾ New by-laws were drawn up. The object of the society was: to further everything which might be of benefit to the Icelandic people in America. Jon Olafsson was the first secretary.

The Society's Work:

The society helped arrivals from Iceland who were without means, reach their respective destinations. During the winter 1881-2, the society maintained a children's school, which taught arithmetic; English; Icelandic; and other subjects.⁽¹³¹⁾ This school was unique among the settlers of various nationalities who settled in Winnipeg. During this winter, the Framfarafelag gave \$235.50 towards the support of this school. Most of this money was donated by the young Icelanders of both sexes, who were working in Winnipeg. The following winter the school was still kept open. Governing regulations for the school were drawn up. A committee was chosen to hire teachers, to decide what subjects should be taught, and to keep

the school accounts, etc. Teachers were to be hired for a month at a time only. Should no more than fifteen children enroll, only one teacher was to be employed, but if the attendance reached twenty-five there were to be two teachers. \$2.00 tuition fee per month was charged for each child. Orphans, and the children of poor parents could attend free. The schoolhouse, and all equipment was provided by the society. The teachers and the committee had sole charge of the school. During the winter 1883-4 Baldvin L. Baldvinsson was the teacher.

Balgi Jonsson bought a lot and gave it to the Icelandic society as a site for a hall. Building commenced at once. The first meeting was held in the hall on July 10th, 1881. This hall proved of great value to the Icelanders in Winnipeg. Here people could meet, and all Icelandic societies could make their headquarters. The hall was situated at 137 Jemima Street, now Elgin Avenue. In 1883 Baldvin L. Baldvinsson was president of the society. In 1884 the hall was made more commodious. In that year Rev. Jon Bjarnason took over the congregation in Winnipeg, and it held its meetings in the hall of the Framfarafelag till 1887, when a church was built. As the activities of the congregation grew many members of the Framfarafelag (Icelandic Society) felt that there was no longer any need for the society, since the church had assumed many of its activities. In 1891 the hall was sold. In 1893 the proceeds were donated to the school fund of the Lutheran Synod, and also to the building fund of the Good Templar's Society in Winnipeg. (132)

Oriental Literary Society:

In the fall of 1882 Bjorn S. Brynjolfsson formed a society called the Oriental Literary Society.(133) He had attended the Lutheran College of Divinity at Greenville, Penn., with the intention of becoming a minister, but had abandoned his course. The society held that all learning had its origin in the East, and therefore it was the best that could be studied. The slogan of the society was: "Per Gradus". The purposes of the society were: To further education and the reading of good books; to acquaint its members with English learning; to awaken in them the desire for higher things; and to broaden their mental outlook. The meetings of this society were secret, and many viewed it with suspicion. An open meeting was held on May 12th, 1883 to explain the society's purpose and work. During the summer of 1883 B. S. Brynjolfsson left for Dakota and after his departure, the society discontinued.

The Icelandic Real Estate Company:(134)

In 1881, an Icelandic real estate company was formed to capitalize the real estate boom which Winnipeg was experiencing at that time. The majority of the Icelanders invested varying amounts of money, according to their means, in this company. They were firmly convinced that wealth and affluence would soon be theirs. Jon Julius was the company's president, with Kristjan Jonsson and Fridfinnur Johannesson as vice-presidents. Most of the shareholders of the company turned in their property or cash to the company. The property turned

in to the company was appraised. Estimates as to value were generally quite high in order to please the shareholders. Whenever anyone wished to withdraw from the company the cash value of the holdings, as shown on the books was paid. This procedure was satisfactory *while* as land values were high. Shortly after its formation the company showed a considerable profit. Any cash that was received was generally re-invested.

There was a heavy fall of snow during the winter of 1882, and in the spring a flood stopped all work in Winnipeg. The Broadway bridge, over the river, broke and the railway company had to use boats to enable passengers to make connections between trains. During this period large numbers of people, who had heard of the prosperity in Manitoba were on their way there with their livestock and chattels to share in the supposed harvest. These people suffered greatly. Hay sold for \$80.00 per load at Emerson and for \$100.00 per load at Brandon. Men were forced to pay these prices in order to keep their stock from dying. These misfortunes retarded the trade of Winnipeg temporarily. The land boom collapsed and the Icelandic company dissolved. The assets of the company, both land and money were divided. Many Icelanders lost practically all their savings. This experience in land speculation taught the Icelanders a valuable lesson. They realized how unsafe it was to depend on "get-rich-quick-schemes". Hard work and steady progress are more to be depended on than speculation which may, or may not yield large returns.

Society of Icelandic Women: (135)

During the summer of 1881 a number of Icelandic women in Winnipeg decided to form a society that would work along the same lines as the Framfarafelag. An organization meeting was held at which Rebecca Gudmundsdottir was chosen president. Svava Bjornsdottir, secretary, and Signy Palsdottir treasurer. The society's activities were numerous. Its funds were derived from membership fees, concerts and donations. It gave \$64.00 to the building fund of the Framfarafelag the same fall that it was organized. It also paid the Framfarafelag \$50.00 for the use of its hall, and gave \$122.00 to the support of its school. \$60.00 was donated to the relief of the poor, and so on.

A young girl, Gudrun Jensdottir, who worked as a domestic, contributed for a whole year, one half of her monthly salary of \$15.00 to the support of the school. This is a striking example of the devotion to a cause and self-sacrifice which characterized the brave, young Icelandic immigrants.

The society gave \$87.00 to assist two young girls who were studying music at a convent, and \$50.00 towards the memorial fund for Rev. Hallgrim Petursson, Iceland's greatest hymn writer(1614-74). It also assisted immigrants, none of whom were left even over night in the immigration hall. In 1883 the Icelandic newspaper, Leifur, reported that the society had from the time of its organization, contributed \$500.00 for various charitable purposes, and had a cash balance on hand of \$150.00.

After 1886 many members of the church felt that the society should identify itself entirely with the church and

cease to function as a separate organization. This caused a cleavage and considerable discontent, and in 1890 the society was dissolved.

Icelandic Good Templar's Society of Winnipeg:

When the first Icelanders arrived in Winnipeg in 1875 the city was in its infancy. It was the headquarters of merchants and traders, who transacted business throughout the great North-west. As happens so frequently in towns which are situated on the very rim of civilization, drinking was quite common. Naturally the Icelanders were not entirely free from this evil, although it never became general among them. It has been said that one of the first English words which the newcomers learned was "beer". (135)

The Icelandic Women's Society organized a Temperance Society in 1884 to combat this evil. This society was followed by others of the same nature in other Icelandic settlements. Rev. Jon Bjarnason took an active and energetic part in promoting this movement. In spite of this these temperance societies did not have a long life. Many felt that the movement was part and parcel of the work of the church, and should not exist as a separate organization. This difference of opinion caused a breach in the Women's Society, and in 1890 when it ceased to function, the Temperance Society in Winnipeg dissolved.

From 1884 on, the Good Templar's movement gained a strong foothold in Iceland. Among the Icelanders who came to Winnipeg in 1887 and 1888 were several who had been Good Templars in Iceland. When these men became aware that the Temperance Society

in Winnipeg was likely to disorganize they made up their minds to organize a chapter of the Good Templar's Society to take its place. Sigurdur Andresson called a meeting at the home of Einar Saemundsson in 1887, to discuss the matter. The meeting decided to form a Good Templar's Lodge.⁽¹³⁷⁾ When a charter was received from the Grand Lodge in Manitoba, these Icelanders formally organized a lodge named Hekla. Since the members wished to hold their meetings in Icelandic, Jon Julius and Os S. Thorgeirsson translated the Good Templar's guide. This translation was later revised and added to by Einar Hjerleifsson and was used till an authorized translation was received from Reykjavik.

The membership of the lodge increased rapidly during the first months, but friction soon appeared. The members were divided on questions of religion and politics. Some were members of the Synod, others were not. Some were Liberals, others were Conservatives, and differences of opinion on these questions led to wrangles at lodge meetings. Soon a large number of members resigned from the lodge and formed another one called Skuld.⁽¹³⁸⁾

As the years passed both lodges began to feel the need of securing a suitable meeting place, and decided to co-operate towards this end. A committee was chosen from both lodges to attend to this matter. In 1905 this committee purchased a lot on the corner of McGee and Sargent and built a fine, stone hall there. This hall was two stories in height, and seated 1000 persons.

During the winter of 1904 disputes regarding religious matters, resulted in many members resigning from the lodge, Skuld. These people formed a third lodge called Island. In 1911 this lodge went out of existence, and most of its members joined the lodge Hekla. In 1916 the lodges started a school to teach Icelandic to the children. This school is held every Saturday. Tuition is free. The Winnipeg branch of the Icelandic National League assumed the burden of operating this school in 1919, and still has charge of this work.

Icelandic Churches in Winnipeg: Lutheran

The first Icelandic minister who came to Winnipeg was Rev. Pall Thorlaksson. He arrived in the fall of 1876 on his way to New Iceland, and returned in October, 1877. It is unlikely that he preached to the Icelanders in Winnipeg at that time. Late in the same month Rev. Jon Bjarnason came to Winnipeg on his way to New Iceland. He preached to the Icelanders in a schoolhouse belonging to Grace Methodist Church, Sunday, Oct. 21st, 1877. (139) From time to time these two ministers, who were then situated in New Iceland, came to Winnipeg and conducted services. Rev. Jon Bjarnason formed a regular congregation in Winnipeg, called Trinity Church, on August 11th, 1878. (140) Though Rev. Pall Thorlaksson did not form a regular congregation, yet many of the Icelanders in Winnipeg looked upon him as their spiritual leader.

During the first years the congregation in Winnipeg was not very active, but after Rev. Jon Bjarnason returned to

Iceland in 1880, it almost ceased to function. About the same time the church lost many of its strongest members, including Arngrimur Jonsson and his wife, and Jon Thordarsson. In 1881-2 the congregation was revived under the leadership of Rev. Halldor Briem, who had moved from New Iceland. In May, 1882, Rev. Briem left Winnipeg for Dakota. The newspaper Leifur states in its edition of May 5th, 1883, that church services had not been held for almost a year.

On the 8th and 22nd of April meetings were held, and it was decided to hold church services every Sunday at 3 o'clock, in the hall of the Framfarafelag, and also to buy twelve hymn books. Several services were held in the following year, but few new members joined the church. There were 130 names on the church roll, but many of these had moved from Winnipeg.

The real growth of this congregation began in August, 1884, when the Rev. Jon Bjarnason returned from Iceland to become its pastor. He preached his first sermon to his re-organized congregation on the 20th day of August, 1884. ⁽¹⁴¹⁾ One hundred and thirty people joined the church on Sunday, August 31st, at a meeting which was held after the church service. At this meeting it was decided to make the service as simple as possible. Rev. Jon Bjarnason, in accordance with the wishes of his congregation abandoned the cassock and chanting, the most characteristic features of the Lutheran ritual. About this time the church changed its name to the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg. It was decided to organize a Sunday School where religious teaching could be given in Icelandic. This

school began with twenty-five children in attendance, but by 1891 the number had increased to three hundred and ninety-nine, and by 1928 to six hundred and fifty. (142) The Sunday School has done noteworthy work in educating the Icelandic children to a knowledge of their Mother tongue.

The membership roll of the church now contains about twelve hundred names, but many of these have left Winnipeg, and are no longer active in the church.

In 1894, a Young People's Society, called the Bandalag, was organized in connection with the church. Meetings were conducted in Icelandic, but of late this procedure has been abandoned, and meetings are now conducted in English. Other societies are: Ladies' Aid; Dorcas Society - a society of young ladies who direct their efforts towards helping the sick and needy; Girls' Club; Girl Guides; The Brotherhood; the Scouts, and the choir.

The church services were held in the hall of the Framfarafelag from 1884 till 1887, when a timber church was built on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Sherbrooke Street. In 1904 a new church was built, finer than any church which the Icelanders had erected in America. In 1921 this church was sold and a much finer one was bought on Victor Street.

In the fall of 1894 another Lutheran church, called the Tabernacle, was organized in the Southern part of Winnipeg, merely for the convenience of the Icelanders in that part of the city. This congregation did not join the Lutheran Synod till 1905. When the minister, Rev. Fridrick Bergmann died,

in 1918, the congregation discontinued. Some of its members returned to the mother church, and others joined the Unitarian Church.

Another branch of the Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, called Skjalberg, was formed in the spring of 1913. It met in a hall on Burnell Street, which was the property of Thorstein Oddsson. Rev. R. Marteinsson was its pastor till 1918. From 1918-20 Rev. R. Runolfsson directed its destinies. In 1920 it disbanded, and many of its members joined the First Lutheran Church.

Rev. Jon Bjarnason died on June 3rd, 1914. His place as pastor of the First Lutheran Church of Winnipeg was filled by the Rev. B. B. Jonsson, who still holds that position.

Union of Icelandic Churches:

In 1886 the five principal Icelandic settlements in America were: New Iceland; Winnipeg; Minnesota; North Dakota; and Argyle. These settlements contained quite a large number of Icelanders. Although congregations had been formed in all five places, only those at Winnipeg and North Dakota had ministers.

Shortly after Rev. Bjarnason's arrival in Winnipeg in 1884, to take charge of the congregation there, the Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen of North Dakota, discussed with him the question of amalgamating the Icelandic churches in America into a Synod, or church union. This union, it was felt, would strengthen the churches and enable them to co-operate, and work more effectively. This discussion led to Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen's

calling a meeting to which all the Icelandic churches were asked to send representatives. This meeting opened on Jan. 23rd, 1885, at Mountain, in Pembina County, North Dakota. (143)

The meeting decided to form the Evan. Lutheran Synod of Icelandic Churches in America. A constitution was drawn up and passed by the meeting. This constitution was afterward presented to the different congregations for ratification. In accordance with these by-laws the purpose of the Synod was to promote unity and christian co-operation among the Icelandic churches in America.

As regards belief, the Synod held that the Canonical Books of Old and New Testaments, or holy books, are the revealed Word of God and the only true and reliable guide to religion, teaching and conduct.

Discussion arose as to whether women could be chosen as representatives to the Synod. The majority held that this question should be left to the discretion of the different congregations.

It was decided that the representatives, after having submitted the constitution to their respective congregations should notify Rev. Jon Bjarnason as to the outcome. He was then to call the first yearly meeting together at Winnipeg.

The first yearly meeting opened in Winnipeg on April 24th, 1885, in the hall of the Framfarafelag on Jemima Street (now Elgin Avenue). (144) There was quite a gathering of people there besides the representatives. Before the meeting was opened a church service was held by the Rev. Jon Bjarnason. At the opening of the meeting it was reported that twelve con-

gregations had joined the Synod and sent representatives. A thirteenth congregation joined later, after the by-laws had been amended. Bjorn Jonsson, from Argyle, was chosen chairman of the meeting. The following matters were discussed:

1. The union of Icelandic churches, and a revision of the constitution.
2. The choosing of a governing body.
3. Establishment of Sunday Schools.
4. Formation of a church paper.
5. Question of purchasing Bibles.
6. Securing a minister for New Iceland.
7. Regulations governing the confirmation of children.
8. Observance of Holy days.
9. Church discipline.

Only the first four, however, were dealt with at this meeting, the other items being left over till the following year.

The most important question before the Synod was that of starting a church paper. The Icelandic churches had no paper at this time, and there was real need for one. It was decided to publish a trial copy of a paper and then to solicit subscribers. The meeting chose a committee of four: Rev. Jon Bjarnason; Pall S. Bardall; B. L. Baldvinsson; and Fridjon Fridriksson, to set this project on foot. The paper was to be a monthly. Jon Bjarnason was chosen editor. The first number came out in December, 1885, but the paper did not really start till March, 1886. The paper was called "Sameiningin", and has continued to be the official organ of the Synod up to

the present day, 1929. The present editors are the Rev. B. B. Jonsson, Rev. Kristjan K. Olafson, Rev. Guttormur Guttorsen.

Further Work of the Synod:

In 1895 there were twenty-three congregations in the Synod, 1905, 37; 1915, 45; 1919, 58. (145) Some of the churches counted here no longer exist. Sunday Schools, were through the efforts of the Synod, started among the various congregations, and have done splendid work in preserving for the Icelanders their language and national heritage.

In the month of June, 1884, a young Icelanders, Friman B. Anderson, arrived in Winnipeg from Ontario, where he had studied for several years. He has the distinction of being the first Icelandic graduate B.A. from the University of Manitoba, 1885. Before he came to Winnipeg he had written many articles in "Leifur", which were well received.

Shortly after his arrival in Winnipeg he delivered several lectures on educational topics in the hall of the Framfarafelag. He suggested that the Icelanders should found a school which would accommodate from one hundred to one hundred and fifty students at a cost estimated by him at about \$15,000.00. He also proposed that a fund be established, saying at the same time that there were now 5000 Icelanders in America, and if each one contributed \$1.00 for three years the fund of \$15,000.00 which would be subscribed, would at interest alone, pay the expenses of the school for the future. (146)

The idea of founding a permanent school was not a new one. Nevertheless, this suggestion was well received, and an open

meeting was held in the hall of the Framfarafelag to discuss educational conditions among the Icelanders in America. The chairman of this meeting was Magnus Pálsson, and the secretary-Baldvin Baldvinsson. The meeting chose a committee of nine men to give the scheme publicity and went on record as being unanimously in favor of founding an Icelandic school. (147)

For some time little was done in this matter. Some felt that the interest on \$15,000.00, even if that amount could be collected, would not be sufficient to maintain the school, others doubted whether it would be worth while to keep up the Icelandic language in this country.

At a meeting of the Synod, held in the hall of the Framfarafelag, 21 - 25 of June, 1887, the movement to found a school was revived. On Saturday, June 25th, a motion was made by Eric H. Bergmann and Fridjon Fridriksson to the effect that the Synod award Rev. Jon Bjaranson \$100.00 for his services as editor of the Synod's monthly publication. This motion was passed unanimously. Rev. Jon Bjarnason accepted the gift, but contributed it as the beginning of a fund to establish an Icelandic College under the auspices of the Synod. Since that time the college question was brought up at every yearly meeting of the Synod, and money was gradually collected for the college fund. In 1900, the question of a higher institution of learning among the Icelanders took a new turn. It was then decided to establish Chairs in Icelandic in Wesley College, Winnipeg, belonging to the Methodist Church, and in Gustavus Adolphus College of the Swedish Augustana Synod at St. Peter, Minnesota.

In 1901 Rev. F. J. Bergmann was appointed teacher of Icelandic at Wesley College, under the auspices of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, which, in conjunction with Wesley College, paid his salary. He continued to serve till 1910, (1909 - 10 Bergmann was paid solely by Wesley) when he was succeeded by Rev. Runolfur Marteinson, B.A., Man., who served till 1913, when the Synod founded the Jon Bjarnason Academy, of which he became the principal, whereupon it ceased to pay any part of the salary of the Icelandic teacher at Wesley. Johann G. Johannsson, B.A., Man., taught the Icelandic at Wesley from 1913-14; Runolfur Marteinson, 1914-15; F. J. Bergmann, 1915-18; Skuli Johnson, professor of Classics at Wesley, 1918-27, when he accepted a position on the staff of the University of Manitoba. From 1913, Wesley College paid the whole salary of the teacher. Since that time there has been no regular teaching of Icelandic except at the J. B. Academy.

In 1905 another Chair in Icelandic was established at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn. Magnus Magnusson, of Cambridge, England, a nephew of Eirikur Magnusson, Librarian at Cambridge University, England, was appointed professor, serving till 1909, when the Chair was discontinued.

The desire of the Icelanders to found a higher educational institution of their own was finally realized in 1913, when a resolution was passed at the yearly convention of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, assembled at Mountain, North Dakota, to establish an Icelandic institution of learning in Winnipeg, Canada. (148)

Rev. Marteinsson was chosen principal, and has continued to occupy that position up to the present. The school was held in the hall of the Skjaldborg Church, 1913-15. From 1915-23, the school was held at 720 Beverly Street. In 1923 a fine, brick school, containing four classrooms, an office, a lab., a library and special rooms for boys and girls, was built on Home Street near Sargent Avenue. During the first two years there were two classes in the school. The lower form gave general elementary instruction to all who were in need of it, the higher form corresponded to Grade IX. Icelandic was taught in both divisions. At the Synod meeting, held at Gimli, during the summer of 1914, the school was named Jon Bjarnason Academy, after Rev. Jon Bjarnason, who had just passed away. During the third year the lower form of the school was done away with, and grades X and XI were added. Grade XII was later added. Students of any nationality can attend this school. Instruction in Icelandic is provided for Icelandic students. The Synod has published many writings and books, the following being the principal ones: (149) Aldamot, a yearly, edited by F. J. Bergmann, given out by the ministers of the Synod - 1891-97 at R. Vik., 1898-1903 at Winnipeg; Aramot, a continuation of Aldamot, editor, Rev. B. B. Jonsson, Winnipeg 1905-9; Arafundur, 1885-6; Framtidin, a children's paper, Winnipeg 1908-10; Fyrirlestrar, from the Synod, 1889, Winnipeg 1889; Gjerdabok, from the 17th yearly Synod meeting to the 35th, Winnipeg 1901-19; Minningarrit, about Rev. Jon Bjarnason,

Winnipeg, 1918; Minningarrit, on the 25th anniversary of the Synod, Winnipeg 1910; new Bible stories, by Rev. F. Hallgrimsson, Winnipeg, 1919; Psalms and other songs of the Bandalag, Winnipeg, 1905; hymn book of the Synod, Winnipeg 1914; translation of Ben Hur by Rev. Jon Bjarnason, printed in Sameiningin, 1909-12; songs of the Bandalag, Winnipeg, 1912.

The Synod has gathered a splendid collection of Icelandic books which are now the property of the J. B. Academy. The nucleus of this library was purchased from the estate of Rev. Eggert Briem, in Iceland. When this collection arrived Rev. Jon Bjarnason took charge of it and added to it many volumes. When he died he bequeathed his own fine collection of books to this library, making it the finest collection of Icelandic books in Canada.

The following have been presidents of the Lutheran Synod: (150) Rev. Jon Bjarnason, 1885 - 1908; Rev. Bjorn B. Jonsson, 1908 to the present day.

Icelandic Unitarian Church:

In 1881 the Norwegian poet, Christofer Janson organized Unitarian churches among his countrymen in Minneapolis and Hanska, Minn. The Icelanders were familiar with his writings through translations by Jon Olafsson. (151) Bjorn Petursson, a former member of parliament in Iceland, and a graduate of Bessastad School there, became acquainted with Janson, towards whose views and religion he had long been inclined. Petursson came to New Iceland in 1876, and became one of the leading men in the Northern part of the settlement. In 1878

the family moved to Pembina County, North Dakota, and some years later he homesteaded in the Western part of Pembina County. He took a prominent part in the intellectual life of the community, and was at the organization meeting of the Lutheran Synod, at Mountain, North Dakota, 1885. Being essentially a liberal in religion, his views were not fully expressed by the more conservative construction which the Synod put on the symbols and confessions of the church. Since this feeling was shared by others, and his liberal tendencies being known, his standing in the church was naturally questioned; he felt himself impelled to champion this more liberal view, which people were accustomed to in Iceland. Meeting with determined opposition, however, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the Unitarian cause, lectured widely, and translated tracts from Christofer Janson, and other liberals.

Due to ill health, he had to content himself with confining his efforts to forming a congregation in Winnipeg. During the years 1887-91, he lectured frequently, and translated and published three tracts by Janson: "Motsagnir Orthodoxiummar"; "Gud Gydinga og Gud Kristinna Manna", Winnipeg, 1887; "Um Threnningarlaerdomin", Winnipeg, 1889, and one by Dr. Minot J. Savage, "Katekismus Unitara", Winnipeg, 1891.

Here it would be well to mention that on February 4th, 1888, the Icelandic Memmingarfelag, which had for its purpose the promotion of free discussion in regard to religious

matters, was organized in the house of S. G. Stephansson, who lived West of Gardar, in North Dakota. (152)

Among the charter members we find the names of Bjorn Petursson, Skapti and Magnus Brynjolfsson, S. G. Stephansson, and others. This society was the first of its kind to be established by Icelanders on either side of the Atlantic. It aroused great interest and discussion, and had a considerable effect on the religious opinions of the Icelanders, not only in North Dakota, but everywhere in America. There is no doubt that the work of this society paved the way at a later date, for the acceptance of Unitarian views by a large number of Icelanders.

On February 1st, 1891, Petursson organized the "First Icelandic Unitarian Church in Winnipeg". (153) Forty persons enrolled at the organization meeting. The congregation called Petursson as its pastor. Up to the fall of 1891 he preached to his charges in the Assiniboine Hall. A church was then built on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Nena Street. On September 25th, 1893, Petursson died and was buried at Mountain, North Dakota. During the remainder of the winter, his wife, Jennie E. Petursson, formerly ^{ne} Caine, conducted the services. The following have served as pastors to the Unitarian church in Winnipeg: Rev. Magnus Skaptason (from Gimli), 1894, to the summer of 1899; 1899-1900, no one; during the summers of 1900 and 1901, Rev. R. Petursson, then attending the Meadville Theological School in Penn., served as pastor during the summer vacations; Rev. J. P. Selmundsson, 1902-3; Rev. R. Petursson, 1903-9; Rev. Gudmundur Arnason, 1909-15; Rev. R. Petursson, 1915-22; Rev. R. E. Kvaran, 1922-28; Rev. B. Kristjansson, 1928-----

During the summer of 1904, the congregation sold its church and built a new one on the corner of Sargent and Sherbrooke. This church was completed and dedicated during the fall of 1905.

In the fall of 1906 a Young People's Society, later called the "Menningarfelag", was started in connection with the church. This society was formed along the same lines as the Menningarfelag, which had been organized in North Dakota, in 1888. As a matter of fact, its first president, Skapti Brynjolfsson had also been the first president of the Menningarfelag in North Dakota. (154) Membership in the society was open to all, regardless of church or creed. The society did splendid work in bringing together on common ground, men whose views were different. It also inculcated in its members a spirit of mutual toleration and co-operation.

When the idea was voiced, in 1910, that the next year would be the 100th anniversary of Jon Sigurdsson, the leader of the Icelandic Home Rule Party, the society suggested that the Icelanders in America should contribute to the fund which was being collected in Iceland, to establish a fitting memorial. This suggestion was acted upon, and a committee was chosen to canvass for funds. It was decided to ask for contributions from all Icelanders in America, which should range from 10 ¢ to \$1.00. By May 30th, 1911, \$2,806.35 had been collected. This sum was sent to Iceland. (155) The committee in charge of the matter there had two bronze statues of Jon Sigurdsson cast, and presented one of them to the Icelanders in America.

This gift was accepted, and the statue was erected, with the consent of the Provincial government of Manitoba, on the North-east corner of the grounds surrounding the present parliament buildings in Winnipeg, where it now stands.

On May 30th, 1909, another Young People's Society was formed. Its meetings have always been conducted in Icelandic. During the war this society worked with the Young People's Societies of the other Lutheran churches in Winnipeg, in sending parcels to the Icelandic soldiers Overseas.

In 1918, April 11th, Rev. F. J. Bergmann, pastor of the Tabernacle (Liberal Lutheran) church, of Winnipeg, died. His congregation, finding it difficult to continue, decided to seek an amalgamation with one or other of the Icelandic churches in Winnipeg. On this question the congregation divided. The property, by court decision, was given to the minority, while the majority amalgamated with the Unitarian in 1921, forming the first Federated Icelandic church of Winnipeg. A new church was built the same year on the corner of Sargent and Banning.

A list of the Icelandic Unitarian churches in America, together with the dates of their organization, follows:
The first Church of Gimli, organized in 1877. In 1891, it followed its pastor into the Unitarian fold and continues in that affiliation to this day.

Arnes Lutheran Church, founded 1877, turned Unitarian 1891.
Riverton, 1924; Arberg, 1924; Piney, 1921; Lundar, 1909;
Sheal Lake, (Otto P.O.), 1909; Oak Point, 1925; Langruth, 1925.
Saskatchewan:

Wynyard, 1906; Quill Lake, 1906; Mozart, 1910; Kandahar, 1924,

Kristness, 1926.

Washington, U.S.A.

Blaine, 1928; Seattle, 1928.

During the summer of 1901, June 16th, to 18th, there was organized at Gimli the Icelandic Unitarian Conference, "Hid Unitariska Kirkjufelag Vestur Islendinga". (156) The conference numbers among its members fourteen congregations and numerous small societies. It published a Timarit, called "Heimir", Winnipeg, 1904-1914. It has also published a Catechism, (Barnalaerdomur eftir Unitariska Kenningu), Winnipeg, 1911.

The following have been presidents of the Unitarian Conference: Rev. Magnus J. Skaptason, 1901 - 6; Skapti B. Brynjolfsson, 1906-14; Rev. Albert E. Kristjansson, 1914-20.

In 1921 the Liberal Lutheran churches in Manitoba and Saskatchewan united with the Unitarian church; the name of the conference was changed to the "United Conference of Icelandic Churches". Since then, Rev. R. E. Kvaran has been its president.

Icelandic Newspapers in Winnipeg:

In 1883 Helgi Jonsson began publishing the first Icelandic newspaper in Winnipeg called "Leifur", and was its editor. The first edition came out on May 5th, 1883. (157) This paper continued till June 4th, 1886, when it ceased publication. (158) He was by previous training entirely unsuited for that position. This paper was a financial failure, but he continued to publish it as long as his means would permit. He realized the importance of an Icelandic paper to the new settlers, who, he

felt, would lose their identity entirely if they had no medium of expression.

Heimskringla:

The last copy of "Leifur" came out on June 4th, 1886. There had been great dissatisfaction with the paper. It was poorly organized, and the editor was wholly unsuited to the task. A movement had been on foot for some time to start a new Icelandic paper. In this connection three men were outstanding: Friman B. Anderson, first Icelandic graduate from the University of Manitoba; Einar Hjørleifsson; and Eggert Johannsson. The former had labored diligently in publishing Leifur, but had always yearned to be connected with an Icelandic paper of which he could feel proud.

The motive for starting another paper was not lacking, but required financial support. About this time, Friman B. Anderson received some money from the Canadian Government for translating immigration literature. This money he immediately invested in buying a press for the new paper, a weekly which he called "Heimskringla" (Globe), and of which he was the sole owner. (159)

The first edition appeared September 9th, 1886, and was well received, which augured well for the future of the paper. (160) It was well written and simple in arrangement. There were five columns on each page, in type that was clear and prepossessing.

There were no less than three editors: Friman B.

Anderson, owner and editor-in-chief; two assistant editors, Einar Hjørleifsson, and Eggert Johannsson. The paper was first situated at 35 & 37 King Street. It was one and one-half times larger than any previous Icelandic paper. The yearly subscription was \$2.00. The editorial policy was to include articles on government questions, labor conditions, literary activities, poetry, and all other matters which might be of interest and benefit to its readers, both in America and Iceland.

The paper was intended to be unbiased in its views, and in no way connected with any political party. All matters were to be discussed on their merits. In regard to immigration from Iceland, the paper did not propose to act as a government organ to induce Icelanders to settle in America.

In the first editorial the following matters were discussed: Should Icelanders take part in Canadian politics (answered yes)? Business questions; new books. On December 2nd, 1886, Einar Hjørleifsson withdrew from the undertaking. From December 9th, 1886 to April 7th, 1887 no paper was published, due to the lack of funds. Friman B. Anderson sold the paper to a company of three men who published it till Dec. 22nd, 1887, when Anderson was able to buy it back again. The paper was then situated at 16 James Street.

On November 15th, 1888, Anderson sold the paper to the printers (for wages due), and left Winnipeg that winter. Eggert Johannsson acted as editor from 1888-90. In 1888, the Heimskringla was organized as a company and many Icelanders, both in Canada and the U.S.A. bought shares in it. In 1890 the distinguished writer and poet, Gestur Palsen was induced to

come to Winnipeg and become editor of the Heimskringla. This was done in order that the paper might maintain as high a standard as that of the other Icelandic newspaper "Logverg", which had in that year secured Jon Olafsson, a well known writer from Iceland, as editor. He came to Winnipeg April 20th, 1890. Gestur Palsson died August 19th, 1891, and the paper was without an editor for a time, during which period Jon Errendsson wrote most of the editorials.

In 1892 a printing company called "Oldin", was formed in Winnipeg. The editor was Jon Olafsson. The first edition came out October 7th. Only twenty-one numbers were published when the Heimskringla and Oldin amalgamated, and from March, 1892, Jon Olafsson acted as editor of the new paper, which was called "Heimskringla and Oldin". The first edition came out on March 2nd, 1892. (161)

During the first three years the Heimskringla contained four pages, each with five columns 18 inches long. Then it was increased so that every page contained six columns each 19 inches long. After the amalgamation it was made larger, and came out twice a week. The paper was then the largest Icelandic newspaper in America. From 1893-96 the Oldin was published separately as a monthly, and then discontinued. Jon Olafsson acted as editor till March, 1894, when he moved to Chicago, and in 1897 to R. Vik., Iceland.

On May 22nd, 1893, a fire destroyed the plant. A new press was bought, but since delivery was delayed the paper was published on a smaller scale. From 1894-7 Eggert Johannsson

acted as editor. In that year the assets of the paper were sold for debt. The shareholders lost all that they had invested.

October 14th, 1897, Einar Olafsson and Bjorn F. Walters bought the press and printing rights of the company and continued publishing it. Einar Olafsson acted as editor till March 10th, 1898, when Bjorn F. Walters took it over as owner and editor. He then sold it to Baldvin L. Baldvinsson, who acted as editor till 1913. In that year F. T. Jonsson, who had been assistant editor since 1910, became editor.

In the fall of 1913 the Viking Press Company was organized on a shareholding basis. It bought the paper from Baldvinsson. From that time the editors have been: Rev. Rognv. Petursson, Nov. 1913 to October, 1914; Rev. Magnus J. Skaptason, 1914 to March 1917; Olafur T. Jonsson, 1917 to August, 1919; 1919 to----- G. T. Jonsson. (162)

As regards politics, the paper has supported the Democrats in the U.S.A., and the Conservative party in Canada. During the years when Baldvinsson owned the paper its editorial policy was to encourage Icelanders to come to Canada.

Logberg:

By the year 1887 there was a fairly clear division apparent among the Icelanders with regard to church affairs and other matters. In politics the division could also be detected, since the Icelanders had split into two factions, Liberal and Conservative. There were many who were opposed to the policies of the Heimskringla and felt that another paper was a necessity. Some who had a high regard for the literary ability

of Einar Hjarleifsson felt that his leaving Heimskringla had been a distinct loss, and urged him to start a paper of his own.

As a result of this fairly widespread feeling, it was announced in December, 1887, that six men: Sigtryggur Jonasson, who supplied the capital, Einar Hjarleifsson, J. Bergvin Jonsson, Arni Fridriksson, S. J. Johannsson, and Olafur S. Thorgeirsson were about to start a new paper called "Logberg" (The name in English corresponds to "Tribune".) (163) The announcement declared that neither expense nor time would be spared to make the paper as praiseworthy as possible. The subscription was \$2.00 per year. Besides general news, the paper, they said, would contain articles, labor problems, literary activities and politics. It was to be impartial in its views, and would discuss all questions on their merits.

The first edition of Logberg is dated January 14th, 1888. (164) In that number it is stated that, although the publishers were aware of considerable opposition, nevertheless they felt that competition was a good thing, and would result in both papers maintaining a high standard. Should one of the papers fail, then the better would survive. The Logberg was, said this article, a continuation of the other two Icelandic papers, Framfari, and Leifur, whose printing rights and presses it had bought.

The first edition contained four pages, each with five columns 13 inches long, and therefore was slightly smaller than the Heimskringla. During the third year it was increased to eight pages. In 1904 it was again increased, and then every page contained six columns, each 19 inches long. In 1911 another

column was added and the page made 21½ inches long. It is now by far the largest Icelandic paper published in America. The paper contained a great variety of news, and the editorials of a high order were written by Einar Hjerleifsson, who acted as editor till March 7th, 1895, save for a short time, from the summer of 1890 till February, 1891, when Jon Olafsson held that position.

After Einar Hjerlifsson left Winnipeg, March 7th, 1895, Sigtryggur Jonasson acted as editor of Logberg till July 18th, 1901. No editor was appointed from July 18th till Nov. 21st, when Magnus Palsson assumed the position and held it till the fall of 1905, when Stefan Bjornsson replaced him, and remained in office till the ppring of 1914, when he returned to Iceland.

Dr. Sigurdur Julius Johannesson was editor from April 2nd, till Sept. 17th, 1914. Kristjan Sigurdsson, from Sept. 17th till October 7th, 1925, S. J. Johannesson, Oct. 7th, to Nov. 1917, Jon J. Bildfell from 1918 to-----

In 1910 the Logberg built a fine, stone building on the corner of Sherbrooke and William Street, where it did all kinds of job printing, besides publishing the paper. That same year the Logberg changed its name from the Logberg Printing & Publishing Co. to the Columbia Press Ltd. In 1925 the printing plant was moved to a new building on Sargent Avenue, where it is now situated.

Vorold:

In 1918 Dr. S. J. Johannesson started publishing an Icelandic semi-weekly Labor paper on Sargent Avenue. The editor was very radical in his views and evinced a strong anti-conscription sentiment in his editorials. This paper went out of existence in 1920.

C THE ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN NORTH DAKOTA:

The first Icelfander to consider the part of Dakota bordering on the Red River as a feasible place for settlement was the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson. He had come from Iceland in 1872⁽¹⁶⁵⁾, and while studying in St. Louis and elsewhere had done field work in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, and had profited by the opportunity to observe the progressive farmers of these states.

In the fall of 1876, Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, who was then ministering to a congregation composed of Icelanders and Norwegians in Wisconsin, heard that a large party of Icelanders (1,200), were on their way to the Gimli settlement. The Norwegian Synod, knowing that these people had no minister with them sent Rev. Pall Thorlaksson to New Iceland to do field work there.

He set out, and went by steamer up the Red River to Winnipeg. While on the boat he had many talks with the Captain of the boat on which he had booked passage. This captain had just taken the large party of Icelandic immigrants to Winnipeg. He thought it a great shame that these settlers should be going to New Iceland when so much rich and fertile land was to be had in the Red River Valley, and suggested that Rev. Thorlaksson persuade them to turn back and settle there. Rev. Thorlaksson replied that this course would be impossible especially since the Icelanders were almost entirely without means, and expected to receive considerable aid from the Canadian government. Again, he could not decide on any definite action, inasmuch as he did not know what the prospects in New Iceland were. In any event this talk planted a seed in Rev. Thorlaksson's mind that was to bear fruit later.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

In the fall of 1877 Rev. Pall Thorlaksson went again to New Iceland and took charge of a regular congregation there. During his stay there he inspected the land far and wide, and came to the conclusion that the place was entirely unsuited to the Icelanders, being low, and in many places swampy. The settlers had experienced great hardships and considerable sickness. Should no attempt be made to find a better location for a settlement the majority of the Icelanders who came to America would doubtless come to New Iceland and fare no better than the earlier arrivals.

The smallpox had disheartened the settlers and the religious disputes between Rev. Thorlaksson and Rev. Bjarnason had divided them into two camps. (167)

Rev. Thorlaksson's views gained popularity, and in April he set out with three companions to choose a suitable locality for a settlement. In Winnipeg they were joined by two others. When the party went from Gimli their intention was to inspect the land in, or near Lyon County, Minnesota, which had then a considerable number of Icelandic settlers.

While in Winnipeg one of the party received from Mr. Hunter, editor of the Standard, glowing reports of the land in Dakota in the neighborhood of the Pembina Mountains. (168) The upshot of the matter was that the party decided to inspect the land in that part of Dakota.

This was done, and the land, grassy plains dotted here and there with clumps of trees appealed greatly to the party. Rev. Pall Thorlaksson decided to leave the party and inspect the land in South Dakota and Minnesota 300 miles to the South. The result of this inspection confirmed him in the belief that

Pembina County, North Dakota would be the best place for the settlement. The journey from New Iceland would not be so long, and in contrast with the treeless plains in Minnesota, there was abundance of timber in Pembina County, which could furnish the settlers with building materials for houses, and also provide cord wood and enable the settlers to gain a livelihood until the soil should yield its crops.

The result of this inspection was reported to New Iceland and caused considerable discussion there. Many there were who walked from New Iceland to North Dakota to verify these reports.

A meeting was held, at which the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson spoke. He said that it was only right for people to remain in New Iceland if they felt that they could make a living there, but if not, they should depart as quickly as they could. (169) The meeting decided to send a letter to the government describing the conditions in New Iceland, and mentioning that many contemplated moving away. This intention was strongly opposed by the government representatives and their friends.

Later, the Rev. Thorlaksson called a meeting of his own congregation in New Iceland and discussed the matter. The result was that a large number indicated their willingness to move to Dakota, but said that they did not have the means to do so. By this time the letter to the government, containing the names of one hundred and thirty families, was ready. The government's reply was, of course, entirely unfavorable to this proposal. There was a strong feeling on foot to compel those who contemplated leaving to pay their share of the government loan before leaving New Iceland. (170)

In the fall of 1879 about fifty families had moved to the new settlement, largely through the help which Rev. Thorlaksson obtained for them from the Norwegians. (171) The winter proved cold and long, and many of the newcomers seriously contemplated returning to New Iceland, but their leader's courage, which nothing daunted, infected them all. Many homes were pinched for want of food at times, but with what Rev. Pall Thorlaksson could borrow and contributions from the Norwegians, the settlers somehow managed. Rev. Thorlaksson travelled far and wide in the interest of his followers. He borrowed, mainly on his personal credit, money, seed and cattle, which he distributed on the understanding that repayment should be made within a specified time.

In the spring of 1880 the water of Lake Winnipeg flooded a large part of the land in New Iceland, causing hardships which convinced many of the people there that the only way they could better their condition would be to move away, a resolve which large numbers acted upon as quickly as they could. The first colonists had settled near Cavalier and what is now Hallsson, and Mountain, and Gardar. (172)

The daily life of the settlers during the first years was one of continuous hard work, for which they felt amply repaid if they got the bare necessities of life in return. Potatoes formed the chief food during the first winter, and there was a limited amount of wheat bread and milk. The people had scarcely any meat save that which they managed to get from the Indians.

The Rev. Bergmann, who has written some masterly sketches about Icelandic pioneer life, describes the first homes thus. (173)

"There were no handsome pieces of furniture in the pioneer's home. Four walls of logs, something put into the crevices between the logs to keep out the draft---Two windows, one at the end opposite the door and the other on the side---In one corner was the bed, in front of it the table, generally under the side window; those who had the wherewithal covered the table with oil cloth and the housewife tried usually to get new oil cloth before Christmas, then everything took on such a festive air that she felt as if she were in a new house. The cabin boasted one chair, as a rule, but in general it was somewhat shaky, thus those who sat on it had to exercise the greatest care to avoid disaster. The painted wooden boxes from Iceland were much safer resting places and they stood in array against the walls. In them had been transported the articles that were the cherished personal possessions of the immigrants; there they were, gaily gleaming in bright red or green. Sometimes the owner's initials were on them in contrasting colors. They were the favorite seats, but even they showed signs of weakness, not so much because of the long journey from Iceland--they stood it pretty well---but rather because of the daily motion to the table and back again to the wall, both at meal time and on the frequent occasions when coffee was served....The stove was placed against the windowless wall, but drawn out on the floor in the winter time, for then it had to fulfil a two-fold purpose, cook the food and keep the family warm....Sometimes on the wall was a place for the clock, that is to say in the homes that had a clock; a good many did not possess one and they had to study the course of the heavenly bodies as had been the custom of their ancestors when

they sailed the seas. It was remarked that in many cases those who did not have a clock rose earlier; thus it was a gain, rather than otherwise not to have a timepiece."

Besides the Icelanders who came to Pembina County from New Iceland there were many who moved there from Wisconsin and Minnesota. Many of these chose farms at Eyford, half way between Mountain and Gardar. Most of these people were in much better circumstances than the ones from Manitoba. The next year, 1881-2, those in Nova Scotia came to Dakota. (174)

During the spring of 1880 considerable plowing was done and wheat sown. Many relied entirely on haying for a livelihood, but soon found this course unwise. Mowers replaced the hand scythe and more hay was put up with less effort. Those who had sown wheat were now able to have it threshed, and the yield gave adequate return for their labor.

In 1880 a large number of the new settlers took out American citizenship papers.

When the Icelanders came to Dakota there were three ways of taking up land: Pre-emption; homesteading; and Tree Right. By taking up land either of the first two ways the settler had to live on his farm three years to obtain permanent possession. By Tree Right, the settler had to fell six thousand trees on his farm and live there three years to obtain possession. (175)

In 1881 a large party of settlers came from New Iceland. (176)
 In 1882, on March 12th, Rev. Pall Thorlaksson died. (177) The newcomers felt his loss greatly, for besides being their spiritual leader, he had labored unceasingly to promote their interests in every possible way.

Progress in Husbandry:

The settlers soon realized that they must have proper equipment in order to farm efficiently. In 1881 two men bought a reaper, which deposited the unbound grain in piles which were then tied into bundles by hand. Others bought a threshing machine, with which they threshed their own and their neighbors' grain.

In the spring of 1884 there were fifty Icelandic families in the district of Gardar, some of which boasted two farms.

At this time many Icelanders walked about two hundred miles South of the settlement and obtained work as harvesters for \$1.50 per day and board. Those that remained behind, or owned oxen, horses, or implements, worked for themselves and for their neighbors. During the first three years many families did not have an income of more than \$100.00 per year with which to keep body and soul together. Any who had settled on forest land made some money by selling wood. Sometimes a man who had travelled from twenty to thirty miles with a load of wood would return home with a pail of syrup or a half a sack of flour as his remuneration.

After the first three or four years all the settlers had some crop in, and conditions changed for the better. Beasts of burden and other stock had increased in numbers. Besides this, better homes were built and necessary implements were to be found on most farms.

During their first years in Dakota the Icelanders did not expect to receive much notice from other nationalities, but it

was not long before they had earned a reputation for dependability and honesty which stood them in good stead when they sought credit.

By 1890 it cannot be said that the Icelanders, generally speaking, were prosperous. Many, for example, had gone deeply into debt to buy equipment and to build suitable houses for their families, as well as shelters for their stock. Yet, in comparison with their condition at first, they had made steady progress and were "over the crest of the hill". During this period they had been frugal and hardworking; much land had been cleared and plowed; horses had replaced oxen; mowers had superseded the scythe; and stock of all kinds had greatly increased in number and quality.

From 1880-1924, no Icelander of either sex has been charged with an indictable offense in the districts of Pembina and Cavalier. (178)

The four farmers who made the economic survey of the North Dakota settlement from which the preceding information is taken, close their essay thus: (179)

"As one looks back over the fifty years of Icelandic pioneering in North Dakota, one cannot fail to admit that much has been accomplished, for now there are smiling fields and attractive homes where formerly there were only a wilderness, uncultivated prairie, and heavy forests. The trials that Icelandic pioneers have had to endure have often been bitter, but they have been granted the redeeming quality of profiting by their struggles in the end in one way or another. We four

elderly farmers, who have compiled this survey, cannot wish our descendants anything better than that they too might gain the reputation that the Icelandic pioneers had in former times-- that they were men of their word and dependable in all their dealings with their fellow men."

Churches in North Dakota:

During the summer of 1880 Rev. Thorlaksson preached at three places in the settlement: Tongue River, Mountain and Park. He did not attempt to organize any regular congregations until that same fall, when he called a meeting on Nov. 24th for that purpose at Park, at which Stefan G. Stephansson acted as secretary. A church was then organized at that place. The church by-laws agreed upon were practically the same as those adopted by Rev. Pall Thorlaksson's congregation in New Iceland. Among other matters this meeting decided upon a site for a cemetery. On Nov. 30th a church was organized at Mountain. January 2nd, 1881 a congregation was organized at Tongue River (Hallsson).

In the spring of 1882 Rev. Hans B. Thorgrimsen graduated from the Lutheran College of Divinity at St. Louis, Mo. Rev. Pall Thorlaksson had left instructions that the Mountain congregation should send him a call. This was done, and the Rev. Thorgrimsen arrived at the settlement in the fall of 1883. (180) About the same time a small congregation was organized in the town of Pembina. In 1884 a church was built at Mountain at a cost of \$1,000.00. It was 28 feet wide and 46 feet long, and accommodated about two hundred people. This was the first church built by the Icelanders in America. (181)

In 1884 Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen organized a congregation in the Pembina Mountains, called Fjalla congregation. The same year the Little Salt congregation was formed in the neighborhood of the town of Grafton, in Walsh County. In 1885 the East Sandrige congregation was formed. It kept that name until it united with the Eastern part of the Tongue River congregation, and then it adopted the name Vidalins congregation. The Tongue River congregation later changed its name to the Hallsson congregation. About this time, the Gardar congregation was formed in the Southern part of the settlement. Shortly afterwards, the Park congregation united with the Gardar congregation and adopted its name.

In 1886 Rev. Hans B. Thorgrimsen moved from the settlement and took over a church among the Norwegians in South Dakota. That same year, Rev. F. J. Bergmann, who had just graduated from the Lutheran College of Divinity at Philadelphia, and the University of Christiania, Norway, accepted a call from the Gardar congregation and took charge during the summer. About this time the Thingvalla congregation, comprising the Southern part of the Gardar district and the Southern part of the Mountain district, was formed. Rev. F. J. Bergmann ministered to all the congregations in the settlement, eight in number, until 1893. In 1893 Rev. Jonas Sigurdsson, a graduate of the Lutheran College of Divinity of Chicago, took charge of Vidalins, Hallsson, Pembina and Grafton congregations. One year later he formed St. Peters, North of the Hallsson district.

Through the efforts of the Rev. Magnus J. Skaptason, who was then the pastor of the Icelandic Unitarian church in Winnipeg, a Unitarian congregation was formed among the residents of Hallsson and West Sandrige districts during the summer of 1895. Due to having no regular pastor, this congregation was not very active, and in 1899 it dissolved.

In 1900 Rev. Jonas Sigurdsson moved from Dakota to the Pacific coast. Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen then returned to the settlement and filled his place till 1912.

In the fall of 1901 Rev. F. J. Bergmann resigned his position and moved to Winnipeg to become teacher of Icelandic at Wesley College. During the summer of 1904 Rev. K. K. Olafsson accepted a call from the Gardar congregation, and held that post till 1926.

During the summer of 1909 disputes arose in the Lutheran Synod regarding religion, and other matters, which resulted in several congregations resigning from the Synod. A new congregation was then formed at Gardar, called Luthers congregation, but the Gardar congregation, the Thingvalla congregation, and a minority of the Mountain congregation, which called themselves the New Theology church congregations, called a separate minister. The following have served as pastors to these congregations:

Rev. Larus Thorarensen, 1910-1912; Rev. Magnus Jonsson, 1912-1915; Rev. Pall Sigurdsson, 1915-1927. Now this church has amalgamated again with the Gardar congregation.

Societies and Newspapers:

In 1886 a Debating Society was formed at Mountain.

On February 4th, 1888 the Icelandic Menningarfelag (Culture Society) was organized in the neighborhood of Gardar, in the house of Stephan G. Stephansson, the famous Icelandic poet. (182) The society's purpose was to promote free thought and inquiry in regard to religious matters.

Many literary societies were formed in the settlement, the first one being the Aurora Literary Society, which was started among the residents of Sandridge district, in 1887. Another literary society was formed in Mountain the same year. In 1889 there were six literary societies. In the spring of 1892 a Good Templar's Society, called Dogun (Dawn) was formed in Hallason district. It functioned till the close of the century. Another branch of the Good Templar's Society was formed at Akra, but it did not survive for any great length of time.

In 1896 a English paper at Crystal, called the "Crystal Call", began to publish a few columns in Icelandic. In 1899 another newspaper, the "Pink Paper", at Bathgate, likewise began to publish a few columns in Icelandic. Around 1900 an Icelandic Society was formed at the Grand Forks University. This society has gathered a considerable collection of Icelandic books.

D ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN ARGYLE:

Location: (183) This settlement is situated in parts of townships 5, 6, 7 and 8, in Ranges 13, 14 and 15, West of the

first Meridian, one hundred miles Southwest from Winnipeg, and thirty miles North of the U.S.A. boundary. From East to West in the Southern part of the settlement the land is hilly, and was, in the early days of the settlement, quite heavily forested. From this area the early settlers secured their building timber. North of these hills the land is quite high and level, and North of this high land there lay a large swamp with an abundance of grass. Later the Manitoba government had part of this swamp drained, thus making available a considerable extent of good land.

The years 1878-9-80 were very wet in New Iceland; transportation was difficult or nearly impossible; hay difficult to get, and cattle starving. In 1880 the lake was very high and flooded most of the settlement. (184) After this series of misfortunes many of the Icelanders, feeling the hopelessness of their position, decided to move to another district. In 1878 many had gone to Dakota at the instigation of Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, who regarded the settlement as a failure. His religious disputes with Rev. Jon Bjarnason, which divided the Icelanders in New Iceland into two factions, doubtless influenced many to move to Dakota. (185)

In 1880 two Icelanders from Gimli, Sigurdur Christopherson, and Kristjan Jonsson set out for Argyle. They had received favorable reports of the land there from one, Everett Parsonage, an Englishman, who had worked for John Taylor in New Iceland, but had subsequently moved to Argyle and "filed on" a homestead there. These two men went with Parsonage on a walking

tour through the district. The land appealed to them, and they selected farms for themselves and for several of their friends. On their return, S. Christopherson "filed on" the homestead which he had chosen. (186)

On September 25th, Skafti Arason and William Taylor, a brother of John Taylor's, set out from New Iceland to inspect the land in Argyle. They deemed the land in township 6, Range 13 and 14 the best in the district, and selected farms there, both for themselves and for several of their friends. These men were the forerunners of a steady stream of Icelanders from New Iceland and Iceland to Argyle, which began in 1881, and continued for many years.

On March 15th, 1881, a party of eighteen Icelanders set out for Argyle. They transported their effects on sleighs drawn by oxen, driving their cattle before them. One, more resourceful than the rest, built a cabin ten feet by six feet, with a small stove in it, and drew it on one of the sleighs. In this cabin the travellers slept at night. This party arrived at its destination on March 31st.

For the first two weeks after their arrival the weather was cold and the ground covered with snow. These settlers, therefore, lost no time in erecting temporary shelters. When the weather became warmer they moved out to their farms. During the first winter, 1881-2, there were six Icelandic homes in the district. During the years that followed this number increased.

All of these first settlers were poor, but some were without any means at all. In spite of poverty, however, there was no real want. A spirit of co-operation and mutual helpfulness existed. They assisted one another to build log houses, which were floorless and thatched with turf. Plowing was started, and good crop yields resulted. At this time hay was cut with hand scythes, but were later replaced by mowers. Oxen were used for field work, since no one owned a horse during the first years. A few individuals bought Red River carts, others built their wagons.

Great inconvenience was experienced by the first settlers because of the distance from both a railway and stores, where they could obtain provisions. The nearest railway town, Carberry, was between thirty-five and forty miles away. The road to that place was so bad that the farmers who had wheat to sell preferred to take it to Manitou or Brandon, a distance of about fifty miles.

Late in the fall of 1886 a railway was built North of the settlement, where the town of Glenboro now stands. Shortly after this, the town of Cyprase River came into existence. The settlement now progressed rapidly. Oxen were sold, and horses and more and better implements bought.

The following two reports on the condition of this settlement are taken from the annual reports of Balávin L. Balávinsson, Icelandic immigration agent from 1886-1895, who sent exhaustive reports regarding the various Icelandic settlements to the Dominion Government. The first is dated 1891: (187)

Argyle Settlement:

"This is the premier settlement in Canada. It is situated in parts of townships 5, 6, 7, and 8, in Ranges 13, 14 and 15, West of first Meridian. I visited this settlement during the present month and found it had made wonderful progress since last year, and that it is well maintaining its position as the foremost of all the foreign colonies in this country, as shown by the following table:-

| | 1890 | 1891 |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Number of settlers..... | 113 | 125 |
| " of persons in their families..... | 526 | 667 |
| " " acres broken..... | 6959 | 8652 |
| " " " under wheat..... | 4458 | 5817 |
| " " " " oats..... | 636 | 861 |
| " " " " barley..... | 33 | 78 |
| " " " " rye, etc..... | | 10 |
| " " " " roots and vegetables... .. | 57 | 56 |
| Total number of acres under cultivation..... | 5184 | 6822 |
| Number of cows..... | 440 | 539 |
| " " oxen..... | 174 | 205 |
| " " young cattle..... | 829 | 834 |
| Total number of cattle..... | 1443 | 1578 |
| Number of horses..... | 234 | 337 |
| " " sheep..... | 590 | 659 |
| " " swine..... | 161 | 362 |
| " " poultry..... | 3093 | 3193 |
| Value of buildings and lands..... | \$228,170 | \$273,840 |
| " " agricultural implements..... | 36,415 | 45,990 |
| Capital at commencement..... | 13,549 | 16,784 |
| Present debts..... | 77,990 | 84,261 |
| Total resources..... | 339,327 | 489,848 |
| Present net worth..... | 261,379 | 405,588 |

From these figures you will observe that this settlement has increased in value during the year now closing, in round numbers, \$150,000, the average net gain being \$1,150 per family, while some have gained no less than \$5,000, which is 30 percent in excess of the annual salary of the Governor General of Iceland. The net annual gain per family, since the settlement was first formed in 1881, has been \$57853.00.

I might here mention that the value of this year's grain in the Argyle colony is estimated at no less than \$90,00. Their wheat was mostly No. 1 Hard, and sold as high as 70 cents per bushel."

Report of B. L. Baldvinsson: (188)

(Icelandic Agent)

Winnipeg, 31st, October, 1895.

The Argyle Settlement:

"The Argyle settlement dated its birth from the year 1881, and contains some 900 people. It is the youngest and yet the most progressive and the wealthiest of all the Icelandic, and I think I may safely add, foreign settlements in Western Canada. It is truly "Canadian" in vigorous growth and stability. When I last visited the colony in 1890, I reported very fully on its condition, but from the latest report of a gentleman who visited it only last month, on behalf of the provincial government, I extract the following for your information. He says: "The harvest in the Icelandic settlement is exceedingly good, the average yield of wheat being 35 bushels, while oats and barley yield 50 and 30 bushels respectively per acre. The yield of roots and vegetables is proportional to that of the grain. The frost has done very little damage in the settlement, and all their wheat is classed as No. 1 Hard. A large number of these Icelandic farmers have placed themselves in such a position that they can rest (summer fallow) their wheat fields every third or fourth year. All their work on their farms is carefully done and special attention is paid to procuring only good wheat for

seeding purposes. Experience has taught them that it pays better to have less area under cultivation and have it carefully worked than to have a larger acreage indifferently prepared. It is generally acknowledged that the Icelandic farmers have a greater yield per acre, and of better quality than the native farmers who live beside them. Their attention to their stock is fully equal to that which they devote to their wheat fields. Their horses, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry are of the best kinds. At an agricultural show held at Baldur on the 5th inst., several of the settlers exhibited their stock, and all of them received prizes. A majority got first prizes for their exhibits. The result is that these farmers can and do now get the best price for all that they have to sell. They have disposed of a large number of cattle and pigs during this year, and will continue in that line annually hereafter. Two brothers in the settlement, who farm in partnership, state that they expect to be able, annually, hereafter, to sell cattle and pigs for from 300 to 400 dollars, without reducing their stock below their present numbers. This would be nothing remarkable if these brothers paid all their attention to the raising of live stock, but they pay equal attention to grain growing, and this year have marketed from this year's yield 5,120 bushels wheat of the best quality, 1,750 bushels oats, 150 bushels barley, and 300 bushels rye, to say nothing of potatoes and other garden vegetables.

"Notwithstanding the low price of wheat, it is safe to assert that the farmers in the Argyle settlement could wipe off

all their debts with this year's wheat crop.

"The settlement has made rapid strides of progress during the last four years. Their wheat fields are much larger now than they were then, and excellent buildings have been erected all through the settlement. Their roads have been improved so that it is now a pleasure to drive over them."

"It is needless to say that most farmers in this settlement own more than one quarter section of land. Very many own two and three quarters, and some own four and five quarters. One of the settlers has a thousand acres. Every quarter section in the colony runs in value from \$600 to \$3,000. Over twenty farmers reaped this fall from 5,000 to 7,000 bushels of wheat each, the value of which will average over \$2,500.00 per man, at present market price. They value their lands according to their productive power, based on their experience of past years. According to this method of valuation, each quarter section of arable wheat land is worth fully \$2,000.00

"When we consider that the oldest of these settlers began operations there only fourteen years ago, and that all have come in poor, averaging \$104 per family, and without any knowledge of agricultural work; that by their intelligent industry they have succeeded in turning the wilderness of the Cypress hills into a perfect garden of fruitfulness, by which they have attained their present prosperity and added wealth to this country, it seems to me that their example cannot fail to challenge the admiration and respect of all unbiassed minds.

They have clearly proven that they are a class of settlers well worthy of the efforts that have been made to get them into this country and settle them here. Let it be known also that the people still in Iceland are fully equal to those who have already come to Canada."

Business Undertakings:

During the first years of the settlement Sigurdur Christopherson maintained a little store in his home. When the railway was built and other settlers opened stores a short distance away he closed his store and began selling farm implements. Since that time, many Icelanders have gone into business in Glenboro, Cypress River and Baldur.

Schools:

In 1883 the first school district was organized. A school was built, that opened the following year. Other schools were later added. Many of the smaller school districts have now consolidated, and schools are kept open the year around. Not only Icelandic children, but many other nationalities attend.

Churches:

Many of the first settlers had been parishioners of the Rev. Jon Bjarnason's congregations in Winnipeg or New Iceland, and he retained their allegiance even after they moved to Argyle.

In 1884 they joined the Winnipeg congregation in sending Rev. Jon Bjarnason a call to the Winnipeg church. Their intention was that he should also act as their pastor. On Jan. 1st, 1884 a meeting was held and a congregation called the Free

Church, was organized. (189) In 1885 the congregation divided and a new church called Frelsis Church was formed. Up to 1890 these congregations had no other pastor than Rev. Jon Bjarnason, who visited them occasionally from Winnipeg. During that time he tried to obtain for them a permanent pastor, but to no avail. In 1888 a theological student, Halfstein Petursson, who was at that time in Copenhagen, wrote to Jon Bjarnason and indicated his willingness to come to America, should an opportunity present itself. Rev. Bjarnason mentioned this man to his congregations in Argyle, whereupon they sent him a call which he accepted. It was not till 1889, however, that he came to Winnipeg. He was ordained by the Rev. J. Bjarnason and began his pastership, remaining there till June, 1893, when he went to Winnipeg. The congregations were without a preacher for three years, when Rev. Jon Jonsson Clemens took his place.

In 1889 a church was built which served for both congregations. In 1896 it was dedicated by the president of the Lutheran Synod. A children's society, or Luther League was organized in connection with the congregation in 1898.

Argyle is divided into six electoral divisions, each electing one councillor. The Reeve is chosen by a vote of all the constituents. Since 1883 the Reeve has always been an Icelander.

Many societies have been formed: The Women's Society; Literary Society; Good Templar's Society; and a branch of the Canadian Order of Foresters.

E Icelandic Settlements East of Lake Manitoba and in the
Neighborhood of Shoal Lake:

Situation: (190)

The South boundary of the Icelandic settlement East of Lake Manitoba is the line dividing townships 17 and 18. There are very few Icelanders living in township 18. The main settlement is in township 19, all the way from Lake Manitoba East to Shoal Lake. The Eastern part of the settlement is called Shoal Lake District (Grunnavatnbyggð), and extends over townships 18, 19 and 20., Range 2 and 3, and over half of Range 4, West from the principal Meridian. The Western part of the settlement is called Swan Lake (Alftavatnsnylenda). Its Southern boundary is the line between townships 17 and 18, and its Eastern boundary the Western boundary of Shoal Lake District. Its Northern boundary is in township 20 to where the land North and West of the lake is settled by Canadians, Scotchmen, Swedes and Norwegians. In the Western part of township 22 there is a large Indian Reserve along the lake shore. Northwest of that the Icelandic settlement commences again in township 22, Ranges 8, 9 and 10, and extends North-west along the shore of Lake Manitoba North to Range 25 and East to Dog Lake, which lies in Range 8. The Southern and Western parts of these districts is called Siglunes, the Northern part the Narrows.

Description:

The land in all these districts is of a very similar nature. Plains and forest alternate. The common trees are, poplar, spruce, maple, ash, elm birch and willow. The land is

rather low, and when the waters of Lake Manitoba rise, floods, which cause great inconvenience, are common. When the water remains for a long time, slough which are surrounded by luxuriant swamp grass, result. On many occasions settlers have been forced to abandon their farms. The question of having a deep drainage ditch dug to Lake Manitoba has frequently been discussed, and would eliminate much hardship, besides making large areas of good land available for use. Although there is plenty of good hay land and pasturage, scarcely any field crops are grown.

Swan Lake Settlement:

The first of the before-mentioned districts to be settled was Swan Lake. All the first settlers to the other districts in the settlement came from that district.

During the years 1884-6, large numbers of Icelanders came to Winnipeg. There was little employment to be had there, however, especially in the winter time. Added to this, the prospects were not promising, and many men felt that the wisest course would be to seek a good locality, and to take up land.

In the spring of 1886 the Dominion Government appointed Freeman B. Anderson and Bjern S. Lindal as land inspectors, to choose a suitable place for settlement. They first travelled West to Moose Mountain and the Qu'Appelle Valley, but were not favorably impressed with the land there. After returning to Winnipeg they set out to inspect the land between Lake Manitoba and Shoal Lake, because at that time, the Hudson's Bay Railway Company had commenced construction work on a branch railway

that was to run between those lakes. The land appeared well adapted, both for cultivation and pasgrage, and was deemed the most promising that the inspectors had seen.

It was felt that the proposed settlement was particularly adapted to the Icelanders, since they could raise stock as they had done in Iceland, and also fish in the nearby lakes. It was thought that Winnipeg, which was within easy access, would in time become the principal market of the North-west, and the settlers could easily send their cattle and produce to that place when the projected railway was completed.

The district, to which the first Icelandic settlers came was called Posen. Several Canadians had, some time previous, taken up land in the Southern parts of townships 17 and 18 when the Icelanders first arrived. Some distance to the West there was a considerable number of French half-breeds.

In the spring of 1887 Arni M. Freeman, Henrik Jonsson, Isleifur Gudjonsson and Jon Sigfusson journeyed through the settlement, and were so well pleased with the land, there that they selected homesteads. (191) On their return they published an account of their trip in the Heimskringla. Arni M. Freeman and Isleifur Gudjonsson returned to the proposed settlement. In May, Freeman, with the aid of Gudjonsson built the first Icelandic home there. Arni M. Freeman mentions that they were harassed by herds of voracious mosquitoes. From 1887 to 1900 an intermittent stream of Icelandic immigrants from Iceland, Winnipeg and other places flowed into the Swan Lake settlement. Large numbers came between the years 1890-1900, when the government promised to build a railway through the settlement and to build roads.

Husbandry:

The first homes were rough log cabins, crudely thatched with hay and clay. All lumber and supplies had to be brought in wagons drawn by oxen from Winnipeg, a distance of 80 miles. The journey usually took from ten to twelve days and sometimes longer, as the roads, had at all times, were sometimes rendered almost impassable by rain.

During the first years these pioneers bought very little coffee, sugar or store supplies. They directed all their energies and earnings to the raising and buying of cattle. (192) Although meat was a real luxury, fish was plentiful. In time cattle increased in numbers; there was no shortage of pasture in the summer and hay in the winter, and a good profit resulted.

When the fall came many of the men went harvesting to Dakota, but later went no farther than Portage la Prairie and Argyle for such work.

Considerable plowing has been done since 1906, and promising yields of wheat, oats and barley obtained. Many have started to raise sheep, and this experiment is being watched with interest. Fishing has of late, become an important industry and provides profitable employment during the winter.

Schools:

In 1889 the Franklin School District was organized. This school is two miles from Lunder P. O. Since that time the Mary Hill, Cold Springs, Stone Lake, Rabbit Point and Deer Horn schools have been opened.

Sheal Lake Settlement:

The Swan Lake settlement experienced heavy rains during the summer of 1890. Some places were flooded and haying was practically at a stand still. The next spring there was so much water everywhere that all the settlers in this district moved to the Sheal Lake District. (193)

New Iceland suffered greatly from floods from 1900-1902, and in the latter year, many settlers came from that place to the Sheal Lake settlement. Many of these people received free grants of land in the new settlement in return for their ruined farms in New Iceland. (194)

Siglunes; Narrows; Dog Lake; Hoose Horn Bay:

The first three districts mentioned before were settled by Icelanders from Swan Lake and Sheal Lake Districts. (195) The first Icelandic settler to settle at Hoose Horn Bay came in 1912 from Gimli, in New Iceland. These first settlers were attracted by reports which alleged that the land was suited both for cultivation and pasturage, and that the waters of the lake teemed with fish.

These settlers were mostly without means and experienced hardships on that account, and also because they were sixty to seventy miles from any store where they could secure provisions. Scarcely any of them owned horses and only a few had oxen. Their condition now changed for the better; their cattle increased in numbers, and there was an abundance of fish at all times.

The settlers would have made greater profits from the sale of their fish had they not been so distant from a market. Westbourne was seventy miles away, and sometimes the fish had to be hauled to Delta or Reaburn, a distance of one hundred miles. Again, the price of fish was so low that it was hardly worth while taking it to market.

In spite of these difficulties the possessions of these settlers increased steadily during their first years, but when they were beginning to make some headway their lands were flooded and many left the district.

After 1900 these Icelandic settlers urged the Manitoba government to build a railway along the lake shore from Oak Point to the Narrows. Deputation after deputation was sent to Winnipeg in furtherance of this object. The Manitoba government agreed to construct this railway within two years, while the Dominion Government promised to dig a canal which would lower the level of Lake Manitoba, thereby draining the flooded lands along its shores. (196)

As a result of these promises many settlers took up land in the districts of Siglunes and the Narrows, and as far North as Moose Horn Bay. In 1902 the level of the lake appeared to be going down which fact influenced many to take up land in the before-mentioned districts.

III. APPENDICES TO CHAPTER IV

A CHURCHBRIDGE(Thingvalla), SASK.:

This settlement is situated in townships 22 and 23, in Ranges 31, 23 and 33, West of the first Meridian, 250 miles North-west of Winnipeg, in Assiniboia(now Saskatchewan). (197)

A. F. Edem, Dominion immigration agent, in his report, dated at Winnipeg, October 29th, 1886, has the following to say: (198)

"This colony was started by Helgi Jonsson, editor of the newspaper, Leifur, published in Winnipeg, 1883-6. In the end of July, 1885 Mr. Jonsson took a trip through the Western country, starting from Winnipeg and going to Minnedosa, from which point he drove to Birch and Shell River, and crossing the Assiniboine River at Shellmouth inspected all the lands lying in Ranges 30, 31 and 32, West first, and Range 1, West of the Second Meridian.

"Mr. Jonsson picked out township 22 in Ranges 31 and 32 as being the most suitable for Icelandic immigration, and applied to have these townships reserved for Icelandic settlement.

"An account of the trip was published in Leifur on the 7th of August, 1885 and 5000 copies of the paper were sent to Iceland, and a few to the Icelandic settlements in North Dakota and Minnesota.

"There are now (October, 1886) twenty-nine settlers on the land, most of whom have their wives and families with them, and a considerable number of log houses and stables have been erected, and they are all well prepared for the winter. During the past summer they have broken nearly twenty acres on their

different homesteads. There are now in the colony seven yoke of oxen, thirty-four cows, fifty-six cattle, eighty-one sheep, thirteen calves, four pigs, and a considerable quantity of poultry. They have put up between three and four hundred tons of hay to winter their stock, and they are well supplied with implements, having between them five wagons, three ploughs, mower, rake, sleighs, etc.

"This colony affords one of the best instances ever given to Icelanders for securing a good home among their own people, in splendid country, well timbered, and the soil being very rich, water was obtained in most cases by digging from twelve to eighteen feet. The centre of the colony is within five miles of Langenburg station."

Helgi Jonsson at that time had a store in Shellmouth, sixteen miles distant from the settlement. A survey for a railway had then been completed through Shellmouth, and also through the new settlement. (199) The railway, however, did not pass through Shellmouth as had been expected, but was built over the Assiniboine River, fifteen miles South of that place. The sawmill which had been situated at Shellmouth was moved to the railway, to a place which was then named Millwood.

The first Icelander to take up land in the Churchbridge settlement was called Jon Magnusson. He came in the year 1885. (200)

During the winter of 1885-6, two Icelanders from Winnipeg, Einar Jonsson Sudfjord and Bjorn Olafsson arrived in the settlement to put up buildings on the land which they had already "filed on". (201) During the spring of 1886 fifteen families

took up land and settled in the district. About this time work was being done on the railway which now lies through the settlement. During the fall of 1885 the steel reached Sols-girth, so that the families that came the following spring could travel to that point by rail, but the remaining sixty miles to the settlement had to be travelled in wagons drawn by oxen, that is, if they possessed oxen, those who did not had to purchase transportation both for themselves and their effects.

During the month of August, 1886, six families came direct to the settlement from Iceland. Later in the fall two other families from Iceland arrived.

During the winter of 1886 the railway reached Langenburg and then the Icelanders had only to travel six to ten miles to reach a store. Early in 1887 Helgi Jonsson moved from Shellmouth and started a store in that place.

In the spring of 1887 a considerable number of English settlers arrived and took up land. Their coming helped the Icelanders, who worked for them, building homes, and sold them hay. At this time there was considerable work to be had on the railway.

In 1888 the town of Churchbridge was started under the supervision of the Churchbridge Colonization Company, which was supported by the Church of England. (202) This town, which exists today, was and still is, the centre of the Icelandic settlements.

The company built a Rectory, Church and School, a lodging house, a blacksmith shop, etc. Many Englishmen took up land in

the neighborhood. The company built houses on their farms and loaned them money to start farming.

In 1886, while the M. & N. W. Railway (now C.P.R.) was being built the railway company loaned the settlers small sums of money to commence farming. Later the Canada Settlers Loan & Trust Company loaned the settlers sums of money ranging from \$300.00 to \$400.00, provided that they were within a certain distance of the railway. Of course, these loans were covered by mortgages on the farms. Although many lost their farms to the company by foreclosure, still they had obtained valuable experience in farming. The Dominion government allowed all those who had lost their farms in this way to buy others for \$1.00 per acre.

These early settlers suffered considerable hardships from dry weather in the summer and frosts in the fall, which came before the grain had ripened. Again, since they had to sow their grain by hand, birds played havoc with their newly sown fields. (203)

The summer of 1892 was exceptionally dry. The grass did not thrive. Several Icelanders then left the settlement to seek a place where they could hay. Some went West to Fishing Lake and White Sand River. They returned in the fall to fetch their stock and implements and left the settlement. (204) The winter was severe and the spring late, and though there was little hay, no Icelsander lost any stock. That spring, between twenty and thirty families moved away. Most of them went East to Lake Manitoba. (205) During the summer of 1894 there was plenty

of hay and water, but in spite of this many moved away. In the spring of 1894 more than twenty families left, most of them going East to Lake Manitoba. (206)

Social Activities:

A school was built during the winter of 1887-8. The railway company donated \$100.00 to this undertaking.

In January, 1888, a congregation was organized. The first minister to visit the settlement was the Rev. Jon Bjarnason, who came during the latter part of October, 1888. The following two years the Icelanders had no minister, but Scripture reading was carried on.

Rev. B. B. Jonsen was the minister part of the summer of 1893 and most of the following year. From 1895-8, Rev. Oddur V. Gislason was the minister. In the spring of 1898 Rev. Hafsteinn Petursson came.

More recent ministers have been: (207) Rev. Petur Hjalmsson, 1902-6; Rev. Hjortur J. Leo, 1909-12; Rev. Guttermar Guttermsson, 1912-18.

B FOAM LAKE & QUILL LAKE SETTLEMENT:

Situation:

This district, without doubt, occupies more territory than any other Icelandic settlement in America. It is forty-eight miles long from East to West, taking in Ranges 10 - 19, West of the second Meridian. From South to North, it varies from twelve to twenty-four miles in width, extending from township 29 - 35. It is approximately 1810 feet above sea level. That part of it,

which is settled mainly by Icelanders is ten miles wide and forty-eight miles long. The soil, taken as a whole, has proved very fertile and produces all the common grains in abundance.

When the first settlers came, most of the farms were quite heavily wooded, but, occasionally a stretch of open plain was visible, and these spots were naturally homesteaded first.

The Icelandic settlers to this district came from the Churchbridge settlement, but their numbers were greatly augmented by others from North Dakota, Minnesota and Winnipeg.

Early in the summer of 1891 two Icelanders, Ingimundur Eiriksson and Kristjan Helgason, from the Churchbridge settlement, went on a land inspection journey West to Foam Lake and Fishing Lake, a distance of 115 miles. They were so pleased with the land which they saw that they resolved to move there, and many others in the Churchbridge settlement determined to follow them. Ingimundur Eiriksson was the first to act on this resolution. Later in the summer he was followed by four others, Gisli Bildfell, Bjarni Janson, Sveinn Halldorsson and Stefan Olafsson. (208) At that time the Manitoba Northwest Railway (now C.P.R.), reached only as far as Yorkton, a distance of eighty miles from the proposed settlement, so that the settlers had to move their own effects the rest of the way. They settled near Fishing Lake, where there was plenty of wood for buildings, good pasturage for their stock, and an abundance of fish to be had from the lake. In a short time their circumstances improved considerably. The main period of settlement in this district extends over the years 1891-8. After that time all the good homestead land had been "filed on".

The part of this settlement which is settled mainly by Icelanders (ten miles by forty-eight miles) contains 866 regular homesteads. Some years ago the Dominion government allowed entry on a considerable number of odd sections (1, 3, 5, etc.) in this part of the country. Besides this, the settlers have bought many farms belonging to the railway company and other companies, as well as from private individuals. There are probably about twelve hundred families in the settlement. Of these, 800, it is estimated, are Icelandic. Their families number about 3,600 persons. This number does not include those who live in the towns of Foam Lake, Leslie, Elfros, Mozart, Wynyard, Kandahar and Defoe, or any farm help.

In 1905 only occasional patches of land were under cultivation, but now (1917) the Icelandic farmers have about 64,000 acres under cultivation; a most praiseworthy record of substantial progress and accomplishment.

In the fall of 1915 every acre under cultivation yielded on the average twenty bushels of wheat, or fifty bushels of oats. Taking into consideration the yield and the price of grain, the value of the crop which the Icelanders in this settlement threshed in 1915 must have been about \$2,000,000.00. (209)

Many of the settlers who came to this district possessed considerable means and were experienced farmers. This may account, to some extent, for the prosperity which is now so general.

Great loss is frequently caused by frosts in the fall. Hail too, is not uncommon, although no frequent. Old timers

are of the opinion that frosts decrease in regularity of occurrence and severity directly as the quantity of cultivated land increases.

Many of the Icelanders have gone to great trouble and expense digging wells in order to ensure an adequate supply of water for themselves and their stock. In parts of the settlement this problem has not yet been solved.

Homes are generally well built and comfortable, but many families, though still living in the first rude houses which they built, have provided fine barns for their cattle.

In the years 1908-9 the C.P.R. extended the railway from Yorkton, West through the whole settlement. The Icelanders are quite numerous in all the towns (before mentioned) along this railway, and they are engaged in various occupations; as merchants, doctors, lawyers, etc.

There are now nine Icelandic congregations in the settlement. (210) Four belong to the Unitarian Liberal Church, four to the Lutheran Synod, and the remaining one, although Lutheran, has not joined the Lutheran Synod.

The Immanuel congregation in Wynyard, and the Augustine congregation in Kandahar have each built fine churches.

There are now two ministers in the settlement; one Unitarian, the other Lutheran. The first Lutheran minister was Rev. Ranolfur Fjeldsted. When he resigned his post his place was taken by Rev. Harold Sigmar. The first Unitarian ministers were theological students, Jakob Larsson and Asmundur Gudmundsson by name. The third, who now has charge of the Unitarian churches is Rev. Jakob Kristinsson.

Halls have been built in all the towns along the railway in the settlement. Half of these belong to the Icelanders, whereas in the others they have a part interest.

Three Good Templar's societies have been formed, but at the present time only one continues to function.

Numerous societies which have their headquarters in the towns along the railway, have been formed by the Icelandic women of the community.

The whole settlement is divided into four regular municipalities, named Foam Lake, Elfros, Wynyard and Kandshar. Icelanders take an active part in all municipal affairs, and have an adequate representation in the councils. Though this settlement is but a small part of the provincial electoral district, yet the provincial representative in 1917 was an Icclander from Leslie, W. H. Paulsson by name.

C ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT IN ALBERTA:

Red Deer, or Markerville:

This settlement is situated in parts of townships 36, 37 and 38, in Range 1, West of the fifth Meridian. (211)

Most of the first Icelanders to settle in this district, came from North Dakota, and were in straightened circumstances. Those who had come from Iceland with any capital had spent most of it in their previous attempts to find a suitable locality in which to settle. Icelandic settlement in Alberta dates from 1888. (212) In that year most of the good homestead land in the neighborhood of the Icelandic settlement in Pembina County, North Dakota had been "filed on". Though the land was good, and the prospects fairly bright for those who had sufficient capital,

yet there were many who had little or no capital, and felt that if they borrowed money at a high rate of interest to enable them to start farming, it would be a long time before they became financially independent; in the meantime they would be working for the loan companies. Others there were who wished to leave because they found that the long, cold winters and the dry climate of North Dakota affected their health adversely.

In the month of March, 1888 a meeting, attended by thirty men was called to discuss the question of leaving the district. It was decided to send Sigurd J. Bjornsson, at the expense of the meeting, to view the land on the Pacific coast. He was directed to choose a locality which had good facilities for fishing, hunting and stock raising, as these pursuits did not require very much initial capital. (213) Mr. Bjornsson journeyed to Vancouver and inspected land there and three hundred miles to the North. He did not feel that this locality would suit the Icelanders, and not having sufficient funds to continue his search he turned his footsteps East again. In Calgary he met an Icelander, Olafur Goodman, who advised him to inspect the land North of the Red Deer River. Acting on this advice, and accompanied by Mr. Goodman, he viewed the land in township 36, Range 1 and 2, and found it so suitable that he requested the government to set it aside for Icelandic immigrants. This business completed he returned to Dakota, reaching that place May 1st. While in Calgary, he had written a letter to Dakota from which the following extract is taken: (214)

"I was well pleased with the land North of the Red Deer River; the soil there is good and grassy; it is mainly plowland

and meadow with belts of trees here and there. There is said to be fishing in the rivers and lakes thereabouts, and the winters are said to be shorter and less exacting in Alberta than East in Manitoba."

When Mr. Bjornsson returned from his trip, those who contemplated moving, had sold some of their possessions, and though they did not like to abandon the idea of going to the Pacific coast, yet that change in their plans did not influence their original intention of moving. These people were forced to sell their property at a great sacrifice, receiving in many cases only a fractional part of its value. In fact some had little more than enough to pay their fare to Alberta.

On May 24th, 1888 a wagon train, carrying the settlers and their effects left Pembina County and journeyed to the U.S.A. boundary. At this time no stock could be taken from the U.S.A. to Canada without first remaining at the boundary at the owners expense for a period of ninety days. This government regulation prevented the settlers from taking any of their cattle with them. In Gretna they took the train to Winnipeg. In Winnipeg some cattle and household effects were purchased and shipped by rail to Calgary.

On arriving in Calgary the party remained there for a few days. Some wished to stay there and obtain work, a plan which would have been the wiser course for those who were practically destitute, but the majority decided to go to the proposed settlement as soon as weather conditions permitted. (215)

At that time there was no railway North of Calgary, but the government promised that one would be built within a short

time, and that it would pass through the locality which the newcomers had chosen.

Those who had sufficient money bought three or four teams of horses, together with wagons, on which it was decided the party should travel to its destination.

The party did not start for their new homes till the middle of June. This delay was caused by rains which were unusually heavy. The eighty mile journey proved difficult, for the horses were of poor quality and the roads almost impassable. The men, with the exception of the drivers, had to walk most of the way, and frequently they had to carry the women and children and household effects over marshy, or boggy portions of the road. The hardships which the women and children had to endure, due to the cold and wet, can be well imagined, for at times they were forced to sleep on the cold, damp ground.

After a journey of six days the settlers reached the bank of the Red Deer River, where they pitched their tents. So void of habitation was the region through which they passed that only five houses were seen during the whole journey, and they were hostels where meals and supplies were sold to travellers. To add to the hardships already experienced, there was no bridge over the Red Deer River and no boats were available. Fortunately some of the party had bought a little lumber in Calgary and this was used to build flat boats on which the party ferried themselves and their possessions over the river, forcing the horses and cattle to swim. It was the 27th day of June that they reached the site of the proposed settlement. (216)

The following day the men began to select homesteads at varying distances from one another. These first settlers numbered twelve, and including their families, the whole party did not exceed fifty.

Little progress was made during the first two years. So poverty stricken was the condition of some of the settlers that they were forced to return almost immediately to Calgary, as that was the nearest place where employment could be obtained. Their families were taken care of by those who remained in the settlement. (217)

There was one store South of the Red Deer River, but prices charged for provisions were very high. A bag of the poorest grade of flour cost \$4.00, coal oil 80¢ per gal., green coffee 33¢ per pound, sugar 12½¢ per pound, etc.

The following winter was mild and of short duration, but in the spring few of the settlers had any money left. The ice broke up early on the lakes and rivers, and the catch of fish, together with the money obtained by working in Calgary, tided the settlers over the first two years.

The post office of the district was called Poplar Grove. A post office called Cash City existed for about a year in the settlement, (1889-90) but at the close of that time, Mr. Zage, the postmaster, finding this venture unprofitable, decided to abandon it. Afterwards all mail was received from, and delivered to Poplar Grove. Through the efforts of E. D. Baldwinson, Icelandic immigration agent for the Dominion government, the

settlement, on June 1st, 1892, again received its own post office, which was named Tindastoll. In 1903 the post office was moved to the little town of Markerville in the settlement. Later, two other post offices were established in the North-western part of the settlement named Solheima and Burnt Lake.

Schools and Societies:

In the fall of 1892 the Icelanders built a school in the settlement, near the home of Stephan G. Stephansson, the well known Icelandic poet. This school was kept open during the winter. There were thirty children in attendance. The schoolhouse was also used for concerts and public meetings. A short time after this another schoolhouse was built in another part of the district.

In 1894, J. Powell established a cheese-making plant in the settlement, and sold shares in it to the Icelanders. In 1896 it failed, and all those who had bought shares lost their investment.

In 1892 a literary society was started in the colony. This society bought books and encouraged reading. In 1913 its members numbered forty. In 1896 a Women's Society was organized. On May 20th, 1904, a Good Templar's Society was organized at Markerville.

The Icelanders in Alberta were without a pastor or a church for a long time. No one paid much attention to this matter, as the struggle for existence occupied the minds of the settlers during the first years. Again, the poverty of the settlers made them feel that they could not support a minister.

In the fall of 1898 a theological student, Runolfur Marteinsson, came to the district and remained there ten days. During that time he preached four times. On Dec. 21st, 1899, he returned at the request of the Synod and remained in the district till Feb. 6th, 1900. Due largely to his efforts, a meeting attended by twenty persons was called Jan. 21st, 1900, to discuss the question of organizing a regular congregation. The meeting decided to form a congregation, which should be called the Alberta congregation. A committee of three was chosen to compose a draft of church by-laws. This was done, and the laws were ratified with a few changes at a meeting held on Jan. 30th. (218)

At a meeting of the Synod, held at Selkirk during the summer of 1900, this congregation joined the Synod.

In 1901 the names on the church roll numbered sixty. In 1907 the congregation built a church at Markerville. (219) From July, 1905 till Jan., 1909, the congregation had a regular full time minister in the person of Rev. Petur Hjalmsen, who preached in the settlement for a short time each year until 1902. Since that time this church has been without a regular minister, and in 1910 it withdrew from the Synod.

The following is a summary of the conditions in the settlement, in 1891, taken from the annual report of B. L. Baldvinsson, Icelandic immigration agent for the Dominion government. (220)

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| "Number of settlers..... | 39 |
| " " persons in their families..... | 166 |
| " " acres broken..... | 70 |
| " " " under wheat..... | 1 |
| " " " " oats..... | 17 |
| " " " " barley..... | 8 1/2 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Number of acres under rye, etc..... | 1 |
| " " " " roots and vegetables..... | 15 1/2 |
| " " cows..... | 127 |
| " " oxen..... | 17 |
| " " young cattle..... | 168 |
| " " " " (total)..... | 317 |
| " " horses..... | 63 |
| " " sheep..... | 442 |
| " " swine..... | 15 |
| " " poultry..... | 444 |
| Value of lands and buildings..... | \$48,720 |
| " " agricultural implements..... | 1,679 |
| " " capital at commencement..... | 9,435 |
| " " present debts..... | 900 |
| Total value of resources..... | 63,752 |
| Total net worth..... | 62,852 " |

In 1914 there were, it is estimated, three hundred Icelanders in this settlement. Altogether, there are probably (1914) four hundred and fifty Icelanders in the whole of Alberta. This includes those in the settlement, and others who live in Calgary, Edmonton, and other parts of the province. (221)

D ICELANDERS ON THE PACIFIC COAST:

Point Roberts:

Point Roberts is a small peninsula three miles long and from one to two miles wide. It is joined to Canada, but belongs to the U.S.A., and is situated in Whatcombe County, in the state of Washington. (222) The nearest town, Ladner, is about ten miles from this settlement.

The first settlers bought their supplies in Blaine, Wash., which is fourteen miles distance, across Boundary Bay, making the journey in small boats. Now a steamer brings mail and supplies from Blaine three times a week.

The U.S.A. government, it seems, originally intended to establish a naval base at Point Roberts, and consequently the land was not thrown open for homesteaders. In 1893, when t he

Icelanders first came to Point Roberts from Bellingham, Wash., and Victoria, B.C. (223), most of the land was occupied by squatters, who lived in crude log cabins, and eked out a bare living by fishing, gardening on a small scale, and occasional employment. These people were only too glad to sell their questionable rights to the land to the Icelanders. In 1908 the U.S.A. government opened the Point to homesteaders, and naturally the residents on the Point were allowed precedence in the matter of filing on the lands which they already occupied.

The first settlers were doubtless influenced in their choice of Point Roberts by the abundance of fish in the neighboring waters. Later canneries were established, which provided ample employment.

Generally speaking, these people are in good circumstances.

There is a circulating library on the island, which has a considerable collection of books. There is also a Lutheran congregation, with a fine church.

Elaine, Washington:

This town is situated in Whatcome County, and was founded in 1888. The first Icelanders came to this district about 1888 from North Dakota and Selkirk, Man.

At the present time, it is estimated that there are about two thousand Icelanders on the Pacific coast, chiefly in Seattle, Elaine, Bellingham, Wash.; Vancouver, Okanogan, Vernon, B.C.; Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Cal.; Warrenton, Sheridan and Portland, Oregon. A few Icelandic settlers came to the Pacific coast in the seventies and eighties, but the majority arrived between 1900 and 1905.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA

1. 1855: Spanish Forks, Utah.
2. 1863: Dana Francisca, Brazil.
3. 1872: Washington Island, U.S.A.
4. 1872: Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Disappeared after 1876.
5. 1873: Muskoka, Ontario. Hekkia P. O.
6. 1874: Firth, Nebraska.
7. 1875: Shawano County, Wisconsin. Disappeared after 1880.
8. 1875: Mosseland Heights, Nova Scotia. Disappeared after 1882
9. 1875: Gimli, Manitoba.
10. 1875: Minneota, Minnesota.
11. 1875: Winnipeg, Manitoba.
12. 1876: Minneapolis, Chicago & New York, U.S.A.
13. 1878: Pembina County, North Dakota.
14. 1880: Argyle, Manitoba.
15. 1881: Duluth, Minnesota.
16. 1882: Grafton, North Dakota.
17. 1885: Gloucester, Mass.
18. 1885: Selkirk & district, Manitoba.
19. 1885: Churchbridge(Thingballa), Saskatchewan.
20. 1886: Sayreville, New Jersey.
21. 1887: Swan Lake & Shoal Lake, Manitoba.
22. 1887: Tantallon, Saskatchewan.
23. 1887: Brandon, Manitoba.
24. 1887: Pipestone, or Melita Settlement, Western Manitoba.
25. 1888: Grand Forks, North Dakota.
26. 1888: (circa) Blaine, Washington.
27. 1888: Markerville, or Red Deer, Alberta.

28. 1890: Okanagan, British Columbia.
29. 1890: Vernon, British Columbia.
30. 1890: (circa) Keewatin, Ontario.
31. 1891: Foam Lake & Quill Lake, Saskatchewan.
32. 1891: House River District, North Dakota.
33. 1892: (circa) Warrenton, Sheridan, Portland, Oregon.
34. 1893: Seattle, Washington.
35. 1893: Rosseau County, Minnesota.
36. 1893: Point Roberts, Washington.
37. 1894: Big Point, Manitoba.
38. 1895: Vancouver, British Columbia.
39. 1895: Brown, Manitoba.
40. 1897: Piney, Manitoba.
41. 1898: Swan River, Manitoba.
42. 1900: (circa) California Settlements.
43. 1901: Arberg, Manitoba.
44. 1905: Smith Island, British Columbia.
45. 1905: Prince Rupert, British Columbia.
46. 1907: Maidstone, Saskatchewan.

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195. Jonsson, Jon fra Sledbrjot. Nokkrir Thaettir um Islendings Austan Manitoba-vatns i Siglunes-byggd, Harrows-byggd, vid Dog Lake og Moose Horn Bay. Alm. 1914, p. 61.
196. Ibid. p. 85.

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198. Eden, A. F. op. cit.
199. Arnason, Helgi. op. cit. Alm. 1918, p. 77.
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