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A Circumscribed Commemoration: Mrs. Rudolph Anderson and the Canadian Arctic Expedition Memorial

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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

In 1926 a plaque commemorating the sixteen men who died during the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913–1918 (CAE) was unveiled. The expedition was highly controversial because of the deep divide between the leader, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and the scientists of the expedition, many of whom were civil servants. Despite their official positions, the scientists were under constraints that blocked their efforts to secure public recognition of their dead colleagues' services to Canada. Belle Allstrand Anderson, the wife of scientist Rudolph Anderson, was theoretically under even more stringent constraints. Yet, using her persona of devoted wife and her connections with the bereaved families — especially the wives and mothers of the dead men — she successfully negotiated the creation of the memorial. The personal and gendered element in its history gives the CAE memorial an unusual position among state-sponsored commemorations. Recent scholarship has placed increasing emphasis on the role played by intimate domestic relations in the history of polar exploration. Drawing on the Andersons' extensive personal archive, this paper examines the interplay between the domestic and the political in the commemoration of what was perhaps the most significant twentieth-century Canadian venture in the Far North.

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Abstract

In 1926 a plaque commemorating the sixteen men who died during the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913–1918 (CAE) was unveiled. The expedition was highly controversial because of the deep divide between the leader, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and the scientists of the expedition, many of whom were civil servants. Despite their official positions, the scientists were under constraints that blocked their efforts to secure public recognition of their dead colleagues' services to Canada. Belle Allstrand Anderson, the wife of scientist Rudolph Anderson, was theoretically under even more stringent constraints. Yet, using her persona of devoted wife and her connections with the bereaved families — especially the wives and mothers of the dead men — she successfully negotiated the creation of the memorial. The personal and gendered element in its history gives the CAE memorial an unusual position among state-sponsored commemorations. Recent scholarship has placed increasing emphasis on the role played by intimate domestic relations in the history of polar exploration. Drawing on the Andersons' extensive personal archive, this paper examines the interplay between the domestic and the political in the commemoration of what was perhaps the most significant twentieth-century Canadian venture in the Far North.

Résumé

En 1926, une plaque commémorant les seize hommes morts lors de l'Expédition canadienne dans l'Arctique de 1913–1918 était dévoilée. Cette expédition avait été très controversée étant donné les profonds désaccords entre le commandant de l'expédition, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, et les scientifiques qui y participaient, incluant de nombreux fonctionnaires. Malgré leur poste officiel, les scientifiques voulant obtenir la reconnaissance du public pour la contribution de leurs collègues décédés n'avaient pas les cou-dees franches. Belle Allstrand Anderson, épouse du scientifique Rudolph Anderson, était théoriquement soumise à des contraintes encore plus strictes.

Malgré tout, utilisant son image publique de femme dévouée ainsi que ses relations avec les familles endeuillées — surtout avec les femmes et les mères des hommes décédés — elle a réussi à négocier l'érection d'un monument commémoratif en l'honneur de l'Expédition. L'aspect personnel et sexué de cette histoire donne au monument une place particulière parmi les autres monuments érigés sous l'égide de l'État. Les recherches récentes ont placé de plus en plus l'accent sur le rôle joué par les relations personnelles dans l'histoire de l'exploration polaire. S'inspirant des archives personnelles des Anderson, cet article étudie la relation entre vie personnelle et vie politique dans la commémoration de ce qui a probablement été la plus importante entreprise dans l'exploration du Grand Nord canadien au vingtième siècle.

During the early stages of the Canadian Arctic Expedition (CAE), the explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson wrote a remarkable series of letters to Belle Allstrand Anderson, wife of the expedition's second-in-command and chief scientist, Dr. Rudolph Martin Anderson. By turns charming, confiding, and accusing, Stefansson mixed expressions of abiding friendship for Belle and moments of genuine self-revelation with melodramatic posing and claims to have been wronged by both the Andersons. The tone throughout is startlingly intimate, with occasional hints of flirtatiousness: although the letters begin with the formal salutation "Dear Mrs. Anderson" and are signed with Stefansson's full name, he refers to her as his "dear girl," assures her that he values and is touched by her "good letters" to him, and urges her to write more.¹ Stefansson's obvious intention was to gain and hold her sympathy, using it as a way to resolve his ever-worsening conflicts with her husband.

The expedition had set out in the summer of 1913; by early 1914 relations between Stefansson and Rudolph Anderson had deteriorated to the point of open antagonism.² Stefansson's ambitions were focused on the search for new land in the Beaufort Sea, while Anderson was in charge of extensive scientific work. If no land was found, the scientific results would stand as the only justification for the large amounts of government money being spent. Stefansson therefore feared a possible resignation by Anderson, and despite his resentment of Anderson's behaviour, he was desperate to prevent a final break.³ In this situation, he had turned to correspondence with Anderson's wife as his best hope.

Such reliance on a woman was anything but unusual for Stefansson. His common-law wife, Fanny Pannigabluk, was essential to the success of his ethnographic work; she and other Aboriginal women also provided key services such as the production of fur and deerskin clothing.⁴ Throughout his career, Stefansson corresponded on a basis of intimate friendship with numerous women, among them Katherine Wright (sister of Orville and Wilbur Wright), novelist Inglis Fletcher, and popular historian Constance Lindsay Skinner.⁵ Most remained fascinated by and actively supportive of him throughout their lives. Belle Anderson, however, did not.

Having learned Rudolph's side of the story from his letters, she resented Stefansson's distorted accounts and sent extracts from his correspondence to her husband with tart comments. "I am not his 'dear girl' even for rhetorical effect," she wrote in exasperation.⁶ Rudolph felt that because the CAE was being paid for by the Canadian government, he owed the government — and especially the Geological Survey of Canada, which had organized the scientific work — a higher loyalty than he owed to Stefansson. He therefore believed he was duty-bound to see that Stefansson's ambitions did not hamper the scientists' programme, and his wife fully supported his position. In time, she would become an even stronger critic of Stefansson, and she ensured that the government commemorated an aspect of the expedition which he was particularly anxious to downplay: the deaths of sixteen men.

Stefansson came to see both the Andersons as enemies, and he freely ascribed petty motives for their opposition to him. As a result, few figures in the history of polar exploration have been more strongly criticized in print than Belle and Rudolph Anderson. In Rudolph's case, a certain degree of criticism was open and public from the time of Stefansson's return in 1918.⁷ The subsequent controversy over Stefansson's attack on Anderson in his book *The Friendly Arctic* (1921) was dubbed "the feud that froze the Arctic" by Stefansson's supporter Donat LeBourdais. According to LeBourdais and others, Rudolph used his influence among his civil service colleagues in Ottawa to smear and discredit Stefansson — a man of prophetic vision who might otherwise have ensured a far better northern policy for Canada.⁸ And behind Anderson, as these critics well knew, stood his formidable wife.

Stefansson himself told his supporters that in their college days Belle Allstrand had wanted to marry him, but she was forced to settle for his

friend Anderson instead. Once married, in revenge she turned Rudolph against Stefansson.⁹ The clash of principles between the two explorers was thus brought down to the level of a squalid dispute, instigated by a sexually rejected woman's frustration and jealousy. This ploy discredited Anderson simply by associating him with feminine emotions: a man who would act on such a motive in the supposedly all-male, heroic sphere of polar exploration seemed unworthy of serious consideration. Belle and Rudolph knew about the rumours Stefansson had started, and were angry but unfazed. "If I have the name I may as well have the game," Belle wrote.¹⁰ To his credit, Rudolph never suggested that she end her involvement in Arctic matters for the sake of his reputation.¹¹

Once Stefansson and the Andersons were dead, Stefansson's explanation quickly found its way into print. His own wife, Evelyn, stated in an epilogue to Stefansson's posthumously published autobiography that "it was really Anderson's wife who had stirred up trouble."¹² Stefansson's biographer William Hunt characterized Anderson as a weak man whose insecurities were aggravated by his inferiority to the brilliant Stefansson and by the demands of his "trouble-making" wife; Anderson was therefore driven to undermine his leader's authority and besmirch his reputation.¹³ Hunt claimed to feel "pity and revulsion at the extent to which the scientist and his wife deteriorated through their unbridled hatred."¹⁴ Even Richard Diubaldo, whose moderately critical remarks about Stefansson in his classic work on the explorer's Canadian career roused the ire of pro-Stefansson Arctic experts,¹⁵ could see little good in Rudolph Anderson and even less in his wife. Diubaldo's book was originally his doctoral thesis; the thesis version portrayed Belle as a harpy who spouted "vengeful and paranoic [*sic*] invective" as part of a deliberate, obsessive "mud-slinging" campaign. The Andersons, Diubaldo concluded, were not dangerous so much as "humourously unpleasant."¹⁶ These remarks were prudently cut in the published book, which nevertheless clearly suggested that both the Andersons were jealous and unbalanced.

In short, Stefansson, his admirers, and even some of his critics have consistently drawn their picture of the Andersons largely from conventional gender stereotypes of the inadequate husband and the overbearing, emasculating wife. Moreover, the new sensitivity to gender issues which characterizes recent historical writing has not changed this pattern. Gísli Pálsson's fine account of the women in Stefansson's life has little to say

about Belle Anderson, but what it does say closely follows the standard negative version. Again, she is described as an unreasonably vindictive woman. With evident glee (but without citing a source) Pálsson describes the elderly Rudolph Anderson, suffering from dementia yet still absurdly eager to denounce Stefansson, and occasionally becoming so agitated that he had to be put in a straitjacket by the staff at the nursing home where he spent his last years.¹⁷ Only popular historian Jennifer Niven has offered a different perspective, calling Belle Anderson “smart” and “feisty.”¹⁸

Many of the Andersons’ critics have dipped selectively into the impressive personal archive Belle and Rudolph created — now held at Library and Archives Canada — but none have done much more than examine a few documents bearing on the more sensational incidents in Stefansson’s career. Yet the Anderson collection offers a remarkable window into the hidden side of polar exploration, showing how the CAE families coped with the stresses and anxieties of having a husband, son, or brother far away in the Arctic — and, in some cases, how they responded to the news that their loved one would not return. When Belle rejected Stefansson’s overtures, she was not merely demonstrating a wife’s loyalty to her husband; instead, she drew (and later disseminated) her negative conclusions through an impressively wide correspondence network. The Andersons’ contacts included families in Canada, the United States, Scotland, France, and Norway; many of Rudolph’s former colleagues on the CAE, particularly Robert Bartlett and William Laird McKinlay; and other explorers such as Roald Amundsen, Ernest de Koven Leffingwell, and Edward Shackleton (son of the Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton). Her connections with the CAE families were particularly important to Belle’s later focus on commemoration.

Most of the Andersons’ correspondents needed no convincing that Stefansson was unscrupulous and untrustworthy. Amundsen called him “the greatest humbug alive”; Bartlett’s pithily expressed opinion was, “Someday he will wake up in hell.”¹⁹ Rather than a conspiracy to damage a great man’s career, it was a case of far-flung families and individuals banding together, often to defend the reputations of dead relatives or friends against Stefansson’s slurs. The exchanges with other women were especially significant to Belle, but some of her male correspondents wrote to her with surprising frankness about the overlap between their exploration careers and their family lives. The sense of shared experience

and shared purpose formed a powerful bond. "Do not stop writing to me ... believe me it is no ordinary pleasure to hear from you," McKinlay (future author of the classic Arctic narrative *Karluk*) wrote to Belle in 1926.²⁰ The depth of her emotional involvement with and commitment to the families and some of the survivors has consistently been overlooked by historians.²¹

The Anderson papers also provide an unusually detailed account of how an intelligent and well-connected civil service wife in early twentieth-century Ottawa could influence government decisions. For most of his career, Rudolph worked in the middle to upper levels of the civil service, but he never reached the exalted rank of deputy minister. Belle was anything but a society hostess. Nevertheless, she expertly used her personal connections with other civil service wives and with men up to and including the prime minister to achieve things her husband and his colleagues could not. Prominent among the results of her behind-the-scenes activities was the memorial tablet to the men who died on the CAE, created in 1926. Official files on this subject barely mention Belle Anderson's name, yet it is clear that without her efforts no such commemoration would ever have taken place.

The story of the memorial plaque as told in the Anderson papers reveals much about Belle's self-concept and the ways in which she represented herself to those she dealt with. In these aspects of her life, she had much in common with her far more famous predecessor, Jane Lady Franklin. Like Jane Franklin, Belle to a large extent defined herself by her role as a wife, and a male-dominated historiography subsequently lampooned her as a meddlesome female.²² In her letters, she often emphasized that she was "Mrs. Rudolph Martin Anderson" (or "Mrs. R.M.A." for short), the wife of a successful civil servant, with all the privileges and disadvantages that position implied. However much Mrs. Rudolph Anderson might know about the hidden history of Arctic exploration, she could never publish or speak openly on such a controversial subject, for to do so might damage her husband's career.²³ But Belle had a second persona: M.B.A. Anderson, B.A., M.A., researcher and expert on Arctic history. In her personal Arctic correspondence, she usually signed herself "M.B. Anderson (Mrs. R.M.)," but when writing to strangers she sometimes assumed her researcher identity, and on one occasion was delighted when a reply came back addressed to "M.B.A.

Anderson, Esq."²⁴ Her knowledge of many Arctic subjects was in fact equal or superior to that of any man, and it earned her the respect of several northern experts — an aspect of her campaign against Stefansson which Hunt, Diubaldo and others entirely ignore.

In the campaign for a memorial, Mrs. Rudolph Anderson dominated (although M.B.A. Anderson also played a part), since it was in her role as explorer's wife that Belle had established her correspondence with the families of the dead.²⁵ This article examines the strategies she employed as she successfully negotiated the creation of the memorial. The strong personal and gendered element in its history gives the CAE plaque an unusual place among state-sponsored commemorations. Without an interplay between the domestic and the political, there would have been no official commemoration of Canada's first major scientific expedition to the Far North. Although the 1920s were a time when commemorative activities in Canada reached an unprecedented level of popularity, the genesis of the CAE memorial was unique in almost every way. Unlike the many monuments to the war dead, the CAE plaque was not created in response to public demand.²⁶ The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which approved and erected the plaque, generally focused on military and political events and figures. Exploration was then no more than a very minor theme in the board's vision of Canada's past,²⁷ and the commemoration of so recent and controversial a venture as the CAE was highly unusual. Success in this campaign therefore required an exceptionally determined individual, able both to act outside established bureaucratic channels and to make expert use of personal connections within the government. Despite the many constraints of her position, Mrs. Rudolph Anderson was unquestionably such an individual.

Belle Allstrand was born in the American Midwest in 1883. From an early age, she felt an interest in both exploration and the Arctic. Her Scottish maternal grandfather was related to David Livingstone, while her Swedish paternal grandfather had gone to Lapland in connection with a business venture and died there.²⁸ Belle was a voracious reader and an excellent student. She was determined to have a college education, and she graduated from the University of Iowa in 1905, then went on to receive a master's

degree in German literature from the University of Wisconsin. Languages were her special gift: besides being fluent in German, she knew French, Swedish, Latin, and Greek well, and could read Norwegian and other Scandinavian languages. After graduating from Wisconsin, she taught high school in Waterloo, Iowa, then found a far better job at the State Preparatory School in Boulder, Colorado. In June 1906, a chance encounter with another University of Iowa graduate, Rudolph Anderson, led to a correspondence that slowly turned into a courtship.

Stefansson's claims of a college romance were entirely fabricated: he had graduated two years before Belle did, and they never met during their student years. Moreover, as he admitted in one of the letters he wrote during the CAE, Stefansson was very "small fry," indeed "a nobody," at Iowa, while good-looking Rudolph Anderson was a campus hero.²⁹ A star athlete and captain of the track team as well as a top student, Anderson left college in 1898 to serve in the Spanish-American War, then returned with the aura of military heroism to enhance his reputation. (Even so, Anderson was shy of attractive, red-haired, outgoing Belle Allstrand when he first met her because she was "so *confoundedly* popular."³⁰ His serious pursuit of her did not begin until 1908.) Anderson earned his bachelor's degree in 1903 and his doctorate in 1906, then taught in a military school until he received an invitation from Stefansson — whom he had met a few times through a mutual friend — to go north on a scientific expedition backed by the American Museum of Natural History. Belle and Rudolph corresponded regularly throughout the Stefansson-Anderson expedition of 1908–1912; after his return, they became engaged and were married in January 1913. Newspaper clippings from the time show that Stefansson and Anderson were received on an equal footing as Arctic heroes,³¹ but Stefansson quickly enhanced his fame by giving lectures and publishing magazine articles, while Rudolph felt that publicity-seeking was distasteful and preferred to concentrate on his scientific reports. Moreover, he was shocked by some of the exaggerated claims Stefansson made in his lectures.³²

Belle certainly did not see Rudolph as second best, although both Andersons were somewhat resentful that Stefansson increasingly treated Anderson as his inferior. When Rudolph was asked to join Stefansson's new expedition as head of the scientific section, he agreed with some reluctance.³³ Even though she had become pregnant soon after the

wedding, Belle threw herself into the role of explorer's wife. Stefansson left virtually all the work of organization to Anderson, and Belle's assistance with practical details quickly established their marriage as a relationship between partners whose mutual goal was the success of Rudolph's scientific work. Both Andersons were liked by the other members of the expedition when they assembled in Victoria, British Columbia, in the early summer of 1913. "Your energy and enthusiasm were the life of the expedition in its early days," topographer John Cox later wrote to Belle.³⁴ Most of those from other countries, such as William McKinlay from Scotland and Henri Beuchat from France, had been hired at the last moment and found themselves a little disoriented by the speed of events and by the unfamiliar environment. They particularly appreciated Belle's kindness to them, and their accounts of her in their letters home provided a foundation for her later good relations with their families. Rudolph, meanwhile, impressed the other scientists by his low-key manner and evident competence, in contrast to the flamboyant Stefansson, whose plans seemed alarmingly vague and even foolhardy.

In newspaper interviews, Stefansson had suggested that the expedition's ship, the *Karluk*, might become frozen into the pack ice and drift north in an attempt to find new Arctic land. Stefansson knew the *Karluk* was not fit for such a venture. But, he said, if the ship was crushed the expedition would merely continue without it, for results were more important than safety.³⁵ Such a casual attitude to human life dismayed the scientists, who were also angered by Stefansson's insistence that after the expedition all their diaries must be turned over to him for his exclusive use. Anderson threatened to resign, and had he done so most or all of the other scientists would likely have followed suit. But, as Belle recounted, Stefansson begged them both for their support and Rudolph relented, feeling that he ought to finish what he had begun.³⁶ Before they left, the scientists gave her the names and addresses of their wives, fiancées, mothers, and sisters, and asked her to do what she could to help the families if "anything should happen."³⁷

The *Karluk* did in fact become caught in the ice early in the voyage — far earlier than Stefansson could possibly have intended. He and five others left the ship, ostensibly to go hunting. The ship, under the command of Captain Bartlett, then drifted westward and was crushed near Wrangel Island off the coast of Siberia. Wrangel Island was a poor

refuge for the men who managed to reach it (eight were lost on the way). Of the six scientists on the *Karluk*, only McKinlay survived. The dead included Beuchat, Bjarne Mamen from Norway, James Murray and Alistair Forbes Mackay from Scotland, and George Malloch from Hamilton, Ontario. In all, eleven of the *Karluk*'s men perished. The others were rescued in September 1914.

In Ottawa, the Department of the Naval Service had responsibility for expedition matters. Its officials, new to such work, did not see any need to pass the reports they received from Stefansson and others on to the families of the missing men. Between the time of the *Karluk*'s disappearance and the rescue, the government did almost nothing to keep the relatives informed. Instead, it was Belle Anderson who voluntarily carried out this task, which she undertook both from a sense of obligation to her husband's colleagues and as a way to survive the devastating grief caused by the death of her newborn son in November 1913. Belle acquired a typewriter and made multiple copies of all news items and official correspondence that came her way, then sent the copies to the families. (She also began a careful study of Arctic history in order to gain all the information she could about previous voyages to the area where the *Karluk* was lost.) Those who were bereaved naturally found particular comfort in writing to someone they felt could understand their emotions, and all except Mary Murray, wife of the expedition's oceanographer, declared that they would never forget her kindness.

Anderson and the rest of the scientists, who were aboard a different ship, the *Alaska*, had successfully established a base in the autumn of 1913. Then Stefansson appeared, explained that the *Karluk* was missing but the men were probably in no danger,³⁸ and that he himself intended to make a sledge journey over the northern ice. The expedition, he insisted, must be reorganized, with many of the scientists' supplies going to him to replace the supplies on the *Karluk*. Anderson flatly refused to let him appropriate either men or extensive resources.³⁹ Stefansson nevertheless made impressive northern journeys, during which he discovered new islands and claimed them for Canada. This achievement naturally raised his credit with the public and with the prime minister, Sir Robert Borden. However, five more men died under various circumstances. The final death toll stood at sixteen — a number exceeded in Canadian Arctic history only by the Franklin and Greely disasters.

After the expedition was over, the Andersons became British subjects and settled in Canada permanently. Rudolph and most of his fellow scientists worked at civil service jobs in Ottawa, while Stefansson published widely on the theme of northern development and embarked on several lecture tours. In his lectures, articles, and finally in his narrative of the expedition, Stefansson paid no tributes to his dead comrades, and he placed the blame for all problems squarely on Anderson and the other members of the scientific staff. To government officials and others, he wrote that the scientists had mounted a deliberate campaign of slander and libel. These complaints were substantiated only by a single letter from Rudolph to Isaiah Bowman of the American Geographical Society (AGS).⁴⁰ The letter was marked personal and confidential, and Anderson stated that, out of loyalty to the government he served, he did not intend to start any open controversies with Stefansson. Nevertheless, Stefansson described it as a formal demand that the AGS and the Explorers Club (of which Bowman was the secretary) should investigate his conduct.⁴¹

In truth, numerous letters and memos sent to Ottawa between 1918 and 1922 prove it was Stefansson who refused to let the matter drop, while Rudolph did little more than occasionally vent to his colleagues and a few other acquaintances.⁴² If Stefansson had ignored or downplayed his conflicts with Anderson in his public accounts, few outside of expedition circles would ever have known about these episodes. Instead, through his book Stefansson placed Anderson and the others in a position where they had to either publicly contradict him or remain silent, thus appearing to admit that his charges were true. They chose to contradict him, but were quickly reminded that civil servants must not become involved in newspaper controversies.

Stefansson, meanwhile, was campaigning vigorously for an official expedition to Wrangel Island, which he believed ought to become Canadian territory. He insisted that a Canadian claim had been established when the *Karluk* survivors raised the Canadian flag there on Dominion Day (1 July) 1914. In retrospect, it is clear that Stefansson attacked Anderson partly out of spite, but mainly because he was afraid that Anderson's influence within the government might hamper his own efforts. If Anderson was discredited, Stefansson hoped his Wrangel Island plans would go ahead smoothly.⁴³ (Stefansson had far underestimated the

number of other civil servants in Ottawa who distrusted him, and in fact his chief opponent there was not Anderson but geographer James White.⁴⁴ Others included Loring Christie, O.S. Finnie, and J.B. Harkin.) To divert sympathy from Anderson, Stefansson loudly proclaimed that the scientists were the aggressors.

This ruse was not effective, and Stefansson's pleas for a Wrangel Island expedition fell on deaf ears. In 1921, he privately sent a party of four men and one Inupiaq woman to Wrangel, hoping that the government would support a *fait accompli*, but all four men died. The leader, Allan Crawford of Toronto, was described in the press as a heroic young man duped by an unscrupulous adventurer.⁴⁵ Any remaining credit that Stefansson might have had with the Canadian government was gone. In 1924, while Stefansson was desperately struggling to redeem his reputation, the bodies of four missing men from the *Karluk* were found on tiny Herald Island, not far from Wrangel.

The Andersons had not remained aloof while the second drama of Wrangel Island played itself out. Belle had utilized her relationships with expedition members to obtain information casting doubt on the alleged Canadian claim in 1914, which she then presented to the government. To do so without involving Rudolph, she drew on a personal connection with the new prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, through mutual American friends in Boulder (where King had worked to resolve labour disputes before he embarked on his political career).⁴⁶ After news of the disaster broke, Belle's personal networks paid off in another way. Allan Crawford's family knew George Malloch's sister, Grace, who recommended that they contact Belle. A letter from Helen Crawford about her dead son arrived in Ottawa on 3 November 1923, at a time when Belle was preoccupied by memories of her own son's death exactly ten years before. The two women formed an alliance, and soon they were sharing information and making practical plans to counteract Stefansson's influence on Canadian Arctic policy, with the aim of protecting "other women's sons."⁴⁷ A year later, the discovery on Herald Island brought Belle into official discussions of Arctic matters.

The Department of the Naval Service had ceased to exist when the Department of National Defence was created in January 1923. Expedition matters were then assigned to the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Most Naval Service officials were given jobs at National

Defence, but one, Franklin McVeigh, was transferred to Marine and Fisheries to deal with the Arctic records and the publication of the expedition's reports. McVeigh was not in the best of health, never having fully recovered from the stress of overwork during World War I (for which the naval department had been entirely unprepared). Eight men from the *Karluk* were unaccounted for, but only four bodies were found on Herald Island. To his dismay, McVeigh was swamped with inquiries from relatives and the press about the identities of the dead men. Some of the letters had a tone that might well have struck him as ominous. "The discovery of the remains and relics [has] awakened memories which have smouldered in the hearts of a Father and Mother a Sister and three Brothers these eleven years now gone past," recounted one relative.⁴⁸ From another came a lawyer's letter demanding that the government pay to have the bodies returned, for the family could not bear to "think of his bones lying out there."⁴⁹

Belle, too, was deeply affected by the news: as she told Helen Crawford, she had already been "so upset feeling sorry for you that I began to think more of the sorrows of the mothers of the *Karluk* disaster than I should, and as always it led me into thinking of my own trouble of that time[,] the loss of the baby."⁵⁰ Combined with sleepless nights caused by her seven-month-old daughter, Isabel, the new "Wrangel horrors" plunged her into depression. "I have been very near a nervous break-down," she told Rudolph, who was away doing fieldwork.⁵¹ However, Belle soon regained a more pragmatic attitude, and with her extensive knowledge of expedition history she was quickly able to identify the men from the equipment and supplies found with them. Officially, the information was provided by Rudolph, but McVeigh and other civil servants knew the real source.⁵²

Until March 1924, McVeigh had been a strong supporter of Stefansson and had uncritically accepted all Stefansson's claims about the existence of an Anderson-led conspiracy against him.⁵³ Then Stefansson had called at McVeigh's office in a state of furious rage, declaring that because he had been badly treated by the government over Wrangel Island, he would never write his long-promised official account of the CAE. Instead, he would continue to publish only for his own profit. This conversation entirely changed McVeigh's outlook, and he transferred his allegiance to the Andersons. In fact, he was so impressed by Belle's knowledge of expedition history that he suggested she should

write the report in Stefansson's place, weaving the story together from diaries and other records. Although she declined this task "because I did not want to touch the diaries of a skunk like V.S.,"⁵⁴ she agreed to become McVeigh's unpaid assistant in assembling all the necessary information. As a result, she was given full access to the official records.⁵⁵



Belle Anderson and her three daughters, summer 1924.

Library and Archives Canada, e011061910

Belle quickly realized that Stefansson had long been working to influence future historians by making sure the documents on file reflected his own views. Not only did his official expedition diaries imply that he was blameless, but there were numerous complaints from him about Rudolph's alleged misdeeds, while a supposed account by one of the Wrangel Island survivors, John Hadley (provided to the government by Stefansson in 1920), contained extensive criticisms of Bartlett.⁵⁶ Hadley had died of influenza in 1919, but through her correspondence with McKinlay, Belle was aware that Hadley's original expedition diary was in McKinlay's possession and that it expressed opinions entirely different from those in the typed, unsigned document sent by Stefansson. Suspecting the so-called Hadley account to be a fake, Belle resolved to counter Stefansson's plan in two ways: first, by obtaining documents of unquestionable authenticity that would cast doubt on his version of history, and second, by inducing the government to commemorate the expedition's dead. Such a commemoration would be in pointed contrast to Stefansson's lack of concern for either his lost comrades or their reputations. "There will be two sides of the affair for posterity," she proudly assured McKinlay.⁵⁷

The Andersons had long felt there ought to be a memorial, but while expedition matters remained under the Department of the Naval Service there was no hope of official action. After the department was disbanded, suggestions on this subject to the deputy minister of marine and fisheries, Alexander Johnston, went unheeded. But the discoveries on Herald Island might well result in unpleasant public comments from the relatives about the government's failure to make an earlier search. A memorial would be a relatively inexpensive way to appease them before they could go to the press with their grievances. McVeigh would now back the plan from within the department, but pressure from above would also be needed to change the deputy minister's views.

Belle decided to draw on her connection with Prime Minister King once again — something that her husband and his civil service colleagues could not have done without appearing insubordinate. As she explained to McKinlay, "Dr. Anderson could not handle it, because he would have had to go to his official superiors and we knew that would mean nothing — delay — and no action. The Marine and Fisheries department had tried that method and got no results."⁵⁸ To Malloch's

mother, Alice, she wrote: "You see, it was desirable that some one outside of the civil service take the matter in hand to push it, and I was the only one who could do that."⁵⁹ Simply as a woman and as someone who had long been in touch with the bereaved families, Belle could claim a right to act independently of official channels and formal procedures.

Belle drafted a careful memorandum, judiciously balancing an appeal to King's emotions with the claim that men in senior government positions supported her plan. She recounted how the families' feelings had been "harrowed" by the discovery of "such remains as were left after the ravages of weather, polar bears, and foxes for ten years." However, she wisely avoided any appearance of excessive emotionalism, instead attaching a dignified, heartfelt letter from Élisabeth Beuchat, who described how the news had reopened old wounds and lamented that, since her son was not one of the four men found on Herald Island, he still had no known grave: "Quels regrets de ne pouvoir écrire sur sa tombe: Près des Amis qu'il avait choisi, qu'il dorme son dernier sommeil, là ou l'a conduit son destin et son amour pour la science."⁶⁰ Belle was also able to report that Charles Camsell and W.H. Collins from the Department of Mines (which had organized the scientific branch of the expedition) and even George Desbarats (the former deputy minister of the naval service, now deputy minister of national defence, who generally supported Stefansson) had been informed of the plan and approved it.⁶¹

On 10 February 1925, an unsigned copy of the memo was presented to King by a sympathetic Liberal MP, William Raymond. King (who had known and liked George Malloch)⁶² evidently both supported the plan and was aware that Johnston, having no particular interest in the expedition, would likely place obstacles in its way rather than spend his department's money on it. Therefore, he forwarded the memo to Charles Stewart, the minister of the interior — who, as King well knew, had developed an intense dislike for Stefansson during the Wrangel Island affair.⁶³ Stewart's department included the National Parks Branch, headed by J.B. Harkin, on whose initiative the Historic Sites and Monuments of Canada (HSMBC) had been formed in 1919. As King also knew, Harkin had a long history of dealings with Stefansson and had come to believe that the explorer was an unreliable mountebank. Indeed, by 1925, distrust and resentment of Stefansson were common among all those in the department who had dealt with Arctic matters.⁶⁴ One of Harkin's colleagues,

John Davidson Craig, commented ruefully that Stefansson “had never been in his office without telling him a lie of some kind.”⁶⁵ Belle was quickly convinced that Harkin was on her side and would carry the project through. “There will be no excuses,” she concluded after she and Rudolph spent a friendly evening at Harkin’s home in early March.⁶⁶ Minister Stewart and his wife, Jane, also became personal friends of the Andersons, joining them at their cottage in the summer of 1925.

King had taken an unusual step, for he and his ministers almost never provided suggestions to the HSMBC.⁶⁷ Without the prime minister’s intervention and the prevailing dislike of Stefansson within the Department of the Interior, it is unlikely that the board would have approved — or even considered — the memorial. Commemoration of the CAE arguably fell outside its mandate, since an event that had occurred only a decade before could hardly yet be considered historical. The board members were focused on military and political events and on securing memorials for their own particular regions. When commemorating individuals, they favoured those who were Canadian-born; most of the CAE dead were foreigners. The members preferred to avoid controversial topics, and when they did not, they generally had cause to regret it: for example, a proposed commemoration of the Acadian expulsion had given rise to bitter controversy in Nova Scotia.⁶⁸ Finally, HSMBC memorials were placed either on the site of an important event or in a location associated with the person being commemorated. But the area where most of the CAE deaths took place was not Canadian territory, and in any case it was considered impractical to erect a tablet in the Arctic.⁶⁹ It therefore seemed that the all-important symbolic link between commemoration and place would present difficulties.

From the Andersons’ point of view, however, bringing the HSMBC into the plan had very significant advantages. The board had developed a standard design for commemorative plaques and an efficient process for the consideration and approval of proposed subjects. There would accordingly be no need for bureaucrats unused to dealing with such matters to work out the details of design and purchase. Moreover, one of the board’s plaques could be erected at a very reasonable cost. The Andersons had originally envisioned a memorial similar to those commemorating the war dead, but the advantages of working through the HSMBC were immediately apparent to them.

For a historical event to be officially commemorated by the government, the board members had to agree that it was of national significance. This problem was quickly dealt with by Harkin, who was a firm believer in the value of the Arctic to Canada. On 10 March 1925, he sent letters to all the members, stating that in his opinion the CAE had done work of national importance. Copies of Belle's memo and Mme. Beuchat's letter were attached. Everyone supported Harkin's proposal, some more emphatically than others. The most favourable response came from Judge F.W. Howay, who wrote: "I am heartily in accord with the suggestion. I can scarcely think of anything more truly national than the work of those who seek to discover and explore the farthest extremes of our country."⁷⁰

When Harkin suggested to Johnston that the Department of Marine and Fisheries might wish to decide on the inscription, Johnston angrily made it clear that he in no way supported the memorial and resented having another government department take up a plan he had rejected.⁷¹ However, thanks to Belle's deft strategy, Harkin had the perfect answer: that the HSMBC had acted in response to a direct request from the prime minister. Quietly ignoring Johnston's objections, McVeigh took on the task of officially forwarding the inscription, which had already been written by Belle in consultation with George Malloch's brother, Edmund. Belle chose the phrase "Pour la science" from Mme. Beuchat's letter; Malloch, wishing to emphasize the patriotism which he believed had been his brother's main motive for joining the expedition, suggested changing this to "Pour la patrie and pour la science." Belle agreed, feeling that even though most of the dead were not Canadians, "doubtless the wish to shed glory upon their own country as well as Canada in the work they were to do, motivated the other members of the expedition."⁷² At their meeting on 19 May 1925, the board members voted to change the inscription to "For Canada and science/ Pour la patrie et pour la science."⁷³ Except for this and one other minor point (the order in which the names should appear), Belle's suggestions about the wording were readily adopted.

When it came to the all-important question of where the memorial should be placed, a plaque in an obscure location would be a kind of victory for Stefansson. Instead, Belle and Harkin aimed high. They both recommended the new Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings, which Belle considered "the most beautiful building I have ever seen."⁷⁴ If this

was done, the plaque would be on view in an impressive ceremonial space at the very heart of the nation's political life. Again, the board agreed. By the end of May 1925, all obstacles seemed to have been surmounted, and everyone involved expected that the memorial would soon be in place. However, there was a delay caused by disputes as to whether Johnston's agreement should be sought before the tablet was actually cast. By the time it had been decided that further communication with him was useless, the question of a second Arctic memorial had arisen.

On 10 June, in response to questions in the House of Commons about the government's degree of involvement in Stefansson's Wrangel Island scheme, Prime Minister King had firmly denied any responsibility for the death of Allan Crawford. At the same time, he took the opportunity to praise the young man's heroism: although Crawford had been duped by Stefansson into the false belief that the Canadian government wanted Wrangel Island, King felt it should not be forgotten that Crawford had shown genuine patriotism and courage. King's suggestion that there should be a memorial to Crawford was enthusiastically endorsed by the other two party leaders, Arthur Meighen and Robert Forke. The proposal was certainly useful to King's minority government from the political point of view, but it seems that young Crawford's death had genuinely touched the prime minister's notoriously sentimental heart.⁷⁵

At first, King considered the University of Toronto the most appropriate site, because Crawford had been a student there and because a permanent tribute to his patriotism "would be helpful in identifying the University with the State, and would serve as an inspiration to younger men of the country."⁷⁶ King also wished to have a competition among Canadian sculptors for an original, unique design. However, a memorial had already been placed in Convocation Hall by Crawford's classmates and, having heard about the plans for the CAE plaque from Belle, his parents were eager to see their son's memory also honoured in the Parliament Buildings. Moreover, Harkin pointed out that the amount voted for the memorial would not cover the cost of a competition. A standard HSMBC plaque therefore seemed to be the best solution. The board had received permission to place the CAE memorial in the Centre Block, beside the arched doorway connecting the Hall of Honour with the Library of Parliament. It seemed appropriate that

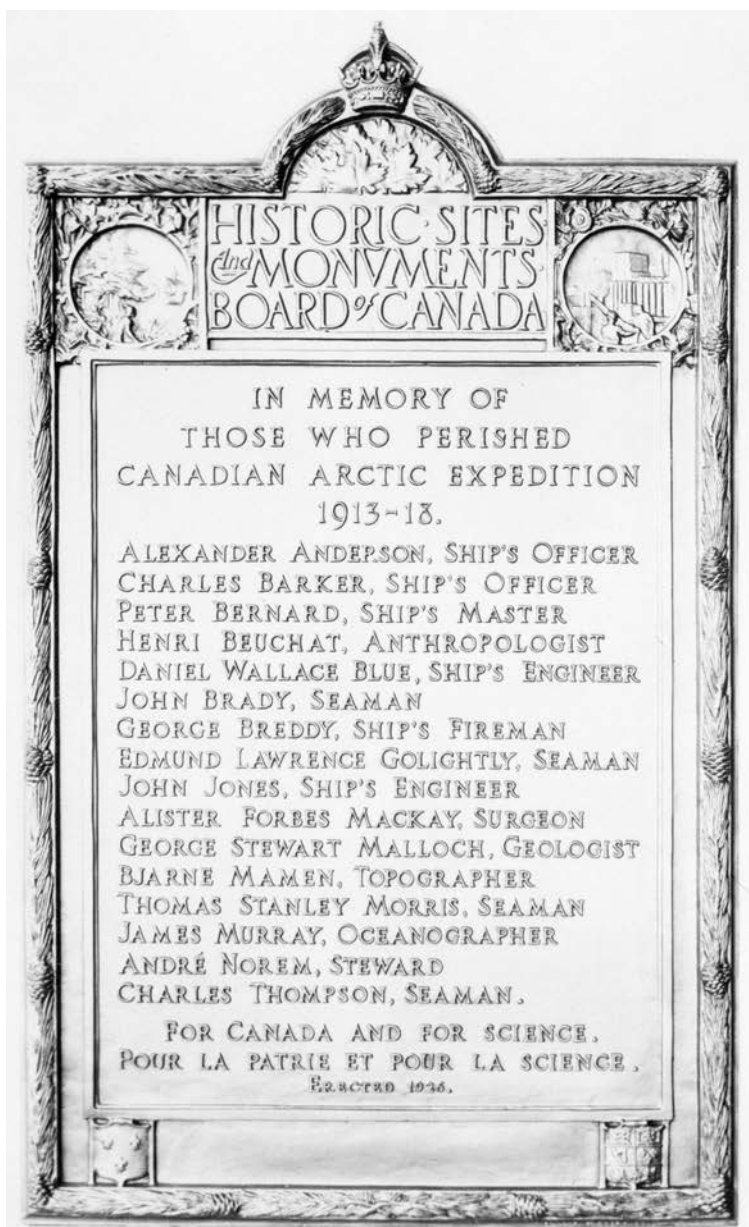
the two tablets should be side by side — especially as there was already an Arctic plaque beside the doorway, commemorating Joseph Bernier's 1909 sector claim.

At this point a serious difficulty arose. All decisions about the embellishment of government buildings and grounds were the responsibility of a committee created in 1922. The members were the prime minister, the speaker of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Commons, and three cabinet ministers. When King put the new proposal to his colleagues, they pointed out that to commemorate the Wrangel Island expedition in such a prominent and symbolically charged location might be dangerous, giving the impression that it had been an official government venture. Such an impression must be avoided in order to make the limits of Canada's Arctic claims clear. As Belle explained to McKinlay, "There is too much feeling that the memorial to Allan Crawford should never have been given, since it was a filibustering expedition[,] and may antagonize Russia."⁷⁷ Cancelling the memorial after it had been approved by Parliament was unthinkable, but another site would have to be found.

The committee's permission to place the CAE memorial in the Centre Block was withdrawn. The real reason was not given in the official correspondence; instead, a letter to the HSMBC merely stated that the decision had been reconsidered because the expedition had no particular connection to Parliament. In future, only tablets with parliamentary associations would be permitted.⁷⁸ (This line of reasoning also provided a plausible reason for removing the Bernier plaque — an action welcomed by officials in the Department of the Interior, who felt that Bernier's unauthorized sector claim was an embarrassment. Rather than being put on display in a different building, the Bernier plaque was consigned to storage.)⁷⁹ Ironically, then, the very disapproval with which Ottawa viewed Stefansson's Wrangel Island venture had ruled out the most favourable possible placement for memorials intended to stand as a rebuke to him.

The new location chosen for the CAE and Crawford tablets was the Public Archives of Canada building at 330 Sussex Drive (later the Canadian War Museum and currently unoccupied). Although the change must have been a serious disappointment, Belle quickly came to see great possibilities in the new site. She had developed a friendly relationship

MRS. RUDOLPH ANDERSON AND THE CANADIAN ARCTIC
EXPEDITION MEMORIAL



The memorial plaque.

Library and Archives Canada, C-025961

with the Dominion archivist, Arthur Doughty, as the result of her efforts to secure new CAE material for the official records. Already, she had obtained Bjarne Mamen's diary from his mother, Valborg Mamen, plus papers and photographs belonging to another expedition member, Fred Maurer. Later, McKinlay would provide a copy of his own diary and send Hadley's diary to Ottawa for copying.⁸⁰ Now the Crawfords agreed to leave copies of their son's letters and other documents in Ottawa for safekeeping. (Ever mindful that she was gathering material for future historians, and that to be effective it must meet critical scrutiny, Belle had warned the Crawfords that when copying Allan's letters, "You must not omit material favourable to V.S. if you want them to be true records.")⁸¹

If the archives building did not have the same visibility and political resonance as the Hall of Honour, it nevertheless was a place where future generations' vision of the past would be shaped. The CAE memorial could therefore become one of those material markers that, in Brian Osborne's words, serve to "punctuate time," "focus space," and transform a physical place — whether landscape or built environment — into a "psychic terrain."⁸² Thanks to the Andersons, the Public Archives had become a key site in the long-term plan to contest Stefansson's version of history. It therefore seemed to others besides Belle that 330 Sussex, "which is visited by thousands of people yearly and is more and more becoming the chief shrine of Canadian history," would be the most fitting home for the two tablets.⁸³

On both the symbolic and the pragmatic levels, Belle was well pleased to have the CAE plaque in close proximity to one commemorating yet another victim of Stefansson's reckless ambition. She explained to McKinlay that the CAE memorial might never have been approved "if it had not been for the mess of the Crawford expedition So since the two expeditions are linked together in ways that the public knows nothing of, I am satisfied to see the tablets in the same location in the Archives Building." Finally, 330 Sussex was a government building and therefore conveyed what she called "the seal of government approval on the work I have done for country, for truth and for history."⁸⁴ The memorial plaque would accordingly stand — at least in the eyes of the Ottawa insiders who knew the story behind its creation — as a lasting rebuttal to Stefansson's lies about Belle.

Doughty gladly provided the best available location for the two memorials. When Belle and Arthur Pinard of the HSMBC visited his office in April 1926, Doughty stated “without any hesitation” that “at the main entrance of the Archives building would be the proper place for these tablets.”⁸⁵ The main doors of the building led from the outside to a vestibule; from there, steps led up to another door. The memorials were placed on either side of the second doorway, where those entering would be bound to see them and realize the cost in human life that Stefansson had downplayed in his books. Although Belle did not specifically say so, she and others must have hoped that future historians would be influenced against Stefansson before they even looked at a document. At the same time, the claim of Arctic history to be a key element of Canadian history would be impressed on everyone who visited the archives. As Belle happily reported to Bartlett, “Dr. Doughty said [the memorial] would have the best place in the building which housed the records of three hundred years of Canadian achievement.” Edmund Malloch was also satisfied with the change, remarking that he had “much more reverence for the Archives than for the home of the politicians.”⁸⁶ At Belle’s suggestion, photographs of the plaque and the archives building were sent to all the families whose addresses were known. “Ces preuves du souvenir sont bienfaisantes aux cœurs affligés,” wrote Élisabeth Beuchat in thanks.⁸⁷ McVeigh, having also received “very gratifying” responses from the other relatives, informed Harkin that he was “better satisfied than ever that the erection of this tablet was a wise move.”⁸⁸

The HSMBC had become expert at organizing impressive unveiling ceremonies, and the commemoration of the war dead offered other models that might have been followed for the Arctic plaques. Unfortunately, all such ceremonies were ruled out by the fear that Stefansson might insist on becoming involved. The plaques were simply put in place by the Department of Public Works, and Belle issued a press release about the CAE memorial. The *Ottawa Citizen*, which had always supported Stefansson, downplayed the news, but the *Ottawa Journal* printed it under the headline “Memorial Tablet for Arctic Heroes: Will Perpetuate Glory of 16 Who Perished.”⁸⁹ Thanks to guidance from the Andersons’ journalist friend George Hambleton of the Canadian Press, the item was released on a day when no major stories were breaking, and

articles therefore appeared in newspapers across the country. Still, the coverage fell far short of that accorded to almost anything Stefansson did.

This lack of ceremony or extensive publicity demonstrates the limits of what a civil service wife could do when opposing a world-famous public man. Had the circumstances been different, and had Stefansson been present at an unveiling ceremony, press interest would naturally have been far higher. Moreover, the plan for an official narrative based in part on the McKinlay, Mamen, and Maurer accounts was thwarted when McKinlay failed to deliver his diary copy in time for publication in the fiscal year 1925–1926. The reason, he confided to Belle, was his wife's severe postpartum depression, which ultimately led to a suicide attempt.⁹⁰ By the time McKinlay had finished copying the journal, economic conditions in Canada were so poor that the government refused to provide the necessary funds for publication. As a result, no official account of the CAE ever appeared.⁹¹ Belle's adroit handling of the situation, then, was still not enough to achieve more than a circumscribed commemoration. In the longer term, for decades her efforts to place authentic records of the CAE in the official files were outweighed by Stefansson's writings and by the vast personal archive he eventually sold to the Dartmouth College Library. Books by Stefansson supporters such as LeBourdais and Hunt also contributed to an exceptionally negative perception of Belle and her husband among Arctic historians.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude, as Diubaldo did, that the Andersons were defeated or that their actions were futile.⁹² The two Arctic memorial projects brought them into contact with civil servants who had become deeply disillusioned with Stefansson through the Wrangel Island affair. Not only did men like Harkin and Stewart wholeheartedly support the memorials, but his interactions with them gave an immediate boost to Rudolph's career. It was no coincidence that Anderson was appointed to the newly formed inter-departmental Northern Advisory Board in the spring of 1925.⁹³ Because the board was composed mainly of deputy ministers and other senior officials, the appointment increased Rudolph's influence and standing considerably. As he himself remarked years later, the controversy with Stefansson did not hurt his status, "and in fact gave me a good start in Ottawa. It brought me very soon in touch with some of the highest officials ... and I was often called into consultation."⁹⁴ Even the prime minister "appreciated what I had done."⁹⁵ Without Belle's

efforts in support of the memorial and her behind-the-scenes work for the Department of Marine and Fisheries, Rudolph might not have achieved this status.

As for the memorial tablets themselves, through Harkin's efforts their message was eventually reinforced by three more plaques on the theme "The Conquest of the Arctic." These tablets listed the names of all the British explorers who had contributed to geographical knowledge of the Canadian Arctic up to 1880. Harkin's campaign for the additional plaques began in July 1926, only a few months after the first two memorials had been put in place. Even though the other HSMBC members were enthusiastic about the idea, the project moved very slowly due to prolonged discussions about the dates, the geographical scope, and other principles of selection. Further delays were caused by the need to secure accurate information about a large number of expeditions. The plaques were finally unveiled in May 1943. The CAE and Crawford tablets were then placed together on one side of the doorway, while the three new plaques were grouped on the other.⁹⁶ The message of the Arctic's central role in Canada's history was thus made far stronger, and the two original memorials were placed within a wider narrative of heroism. What effect these tablets had on visitors must of course be a matter of conjecture, but it seems safe to assume that in at least some cases they made a lasting impression.

But perhaps the most significant outcome of the campaign for a CAE memorial was that it inspired Belle Anderson to collect and preserve not only the records of the expedition but also the records of her own life. She had long been in the habit of keeping copies of some letters she and Rudolph sent, but at first this was apparently done more for their own reference than for posterity. By the mid-1920s, however, Belle's intention was ultimately to set their private papers beside the official documents. "I am a fairly good archivist now after so much practice looking after C.A.E. records," she reflected, and this experience was put to good use.⁹⁷

The Andersons' personal archive is an exceptionally valuable record of both Arctic exploration and Ottawa political culture. Belle's long-running correspondence with Helen Crawford and Élisabeth Beuchat provides a rich source of information about the lives of women drawn together by the Arctic careers of their husbands or sons. The correspondence with McKinlay, whose experiences on Wrangel Island left him

emotionally shaken and whose domestic life in the 1920s was deeply troubled, shows a rare degree of friendship and confidence between an expedition wife and one of her husband's colleagues. "I [have] opened myself out to you more than I have done to anyone for many a day I feel that I am talking to a friend," McKinlay declared.⁹⁸ Belle's own letters are interspersed with her reflections on family life and on such matters as the arrangement of domestic space so as to accommodate both a growing family and her Arctic work. They also record the various social events at which she mingled with other Ottawa wives, particularly Jane Stewart, Isabel Camsell, and Isabel Meighen, plus the wives of journalists Grattan O'Leary and George Hambleton. As she remarked in a letter to McKinlay, "I have had to spend a lot of time in social things such as teas, dinners and all that kind of thing but one can often do a lot in Ottawa for causes that interest a person just at such affairs."⁹⁹ Without the Anderson papers, this female-centred side of Canadian exploration history would have been irretrievably lost.

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Endnotes:

- 1 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), MG30 B40, Rudolph Martin Anderson and Mae Belle Allstrand Anderson Papers (hereafter RMA/MBAA), vol. 7, file 13, Vilhjalmur Stefansson to Belle Anderson, 19 January 1914; 8 February 1914; 16 February 191[5].
- 2 See *ibid.*, vol. 7, file 11, Rudolph Anderson to Belle Anderson, 28 June 1914.
- 3 Stefansson's letters at this time were full of complaints about his second-in-command, but he nevertheless wrote, "I look upon Anderson as the most competent man available ... and I must retain him." Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College (hereafter RSCL), Stefansson MSS 98, vol. 4, file 3, Stefansson to George Phillips, 14 February 1914. Quotations from the Stefansson Collection are by kind permission of Dartmouth College Library.
- 4 See Gisli Pálsson, *Travelling Passions: The Hidden Life of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2003). Belle herself gave Pannigabluk credit for "a lot of the things that made [Stefansson] famous." See LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 31 October 1924.
- 5 On Fletcher, see Jennifer Niven, *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic* (New York: Hyperion, 2003), 310–18, 323, 331–4, 353–4. On Skinner, see Jean Barman, *Constance Lindsay Skinner: Writing on the Frontier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 124–8. On Stefansson's correspondence networks with his fellow explorers and other Arctic researchers, see Christina Sawchuk, "An Arctic Republic of Letters in Early Twentieth-Century Canada," *Nordlit* 22 (2008): 273–92.
- 6 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 2, file 7, Undated extracts from Stefansson's letters with comments from Belle Anderson to Rudolph Anderson. After 1916, Belle did not correspond further with Stefansson except for a short letter written in 1919. She had been told that Stefansson was sorry about the quarrel with Rudolph and wanted to make it up. Belle accordingly expressed her hope that there could be a reconciliation, but refused to act as intermediary. RSCL, Stefansson MSS 196, vol. 3, file 16, Belle Anderson to Stefansson, 6 March 1919. Stefansson simply used the letter to discredit Rudolph: she heard that he had shown it "to ministers & others saying Mrs. Anderson was his friend & it was all a personal feud between Dr. Anderson & him: Mrs. Anderson would never have written if otherwise, etc." LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 17, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 31 March 1924.
- 7 For example, see "Stefansson Tells of His Expedition: III," *Christian Science Monitor* (21 May 1919).
- 8 D.M. LeBourdais, *Stefansson, Ambassador of the North* (Montréal: Harvest House, 1963), 9–12, 173, 177.
- 9 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 27 May 1924. In a letter dated 24 May, Helen Crawford had reported hearing

- the story from Stefansson's associate Alfred Taylor. See also *ibid.*, vol. 8, file 14, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 30 March 1926. This was not the only derogatory story Stefansson told about the Andersons: when his wife questioned him about why he took no responsibility for his half-Inupiat son, Alex, Stefansson told her that Anderson was very likely the father. See LAC, MG31 C6, Richard Sterling Finnie Papers (hereafter RSF), vol. 8, file 6, Evelyn Stefansson Nef to Richard Finnie, 9 May 1976. When writing to those who knew the Andersons, Stefansson dropped the claim of romance, while still emphasizing jealousy on the part of both Belle and Rudolph as the only possible explanation for their actions. For example, see RSCL, Stefansson MSS 196, vol. 9, file 18, Stefansson to Irving Brant, 20 November 1922.
- 10 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 4 October 1924.
 - 11 Rudolph never hesitated to acknowledge Belle's role: "[S]he has been fully posted on expedition affairs from the very start ... and acted as my agent, attorney, and assistant outside, and corresponded with officials of the government and with relatives and friends of the members of the expedition while I was in the North." *Ibid.*, vol. 8, file 7, Rudolph Anderson to Robert Bartlett, 27 February 1922.
 - 12 Evelyn Stefansson, "Postlude," in *Discovery: The Autobiography of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 398–9.
 - 13 William R. Hunt, *Stef: A Biography of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 66–7, 119–20, 121–4. Popular historian Tom Henighan has recently continued this tradition by characterizing Rudolph Anderson's dislike of Stefansson as the near-pathological "enmity of a repressed man." Tom Henighan, *Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Arctic Adventurer* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 48, 73.
 - 14 LAC, RSF, vol. 8, file 6, William R. Hunt, "Wrath on Ice: The Reputations of Polar Explorers"; unpublished manuscript.
 - 15 See Hunt, "Wrath on Ice," correspondence between Richard Finnie and Diubaldo, November 1973, in LAC, RSF, vol. 8, file 6; and Trevor Lloyd's review of Diubaldo's *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic*, *Terrae Incognitae* 16, no. 1 (1984): 105–6. Lloyd chastised Diubaldo for conceding that not all the blame lay with Anderson, and remarked that in comparison to Stefansson's visionary plans for the north, "the obstruction of a handful of disgruntled minor bureaucrats in Ottawa is insignificant."
 - 16 Richard Diubaldo, "The Canadian Career of Vilhjalmur Stefansson" (Ph.D. diss., University of Western Ontario, 1973), 436, 441–2. See also Richard Diubaldo, *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 194–206.
 - 17 Pálsson, 159–60.
 - 18 Niven, 287.
 - 19 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 4, file 4, Amundsen to Rudolph Anderson, 16

- February 1928; *ibid.*, vol. 3, file 12, Bartlett to Rudolph Anderson, 25 April 1925.
- 20 *Ibid.*, vol. 8, file 14, McKinlay to Belle Anderson, 17 March 1926.
- 21 She does receive some acknowledgement in an excellent recent book: see Stuart E. Jenness, *Stefansson, Dr. Anderson and the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913–1918* (Gatineau, Que.: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2011), 333.
- 22 See Penny Russell, “Wife Stories: Narrating Marriage and Self in the Life of Jane Franklin,” *Victorian Studies* 48, no. 1 (2005): 35–57; and *idem*, “Unremitting Exertions: Sentiment and Responsibility in Jane Franklin’s Correspondence (1854),” in *Arctic Exploration in the Nineteenth Century: Discovering the Northwest Passage*, ed. Frédéric Regard (London: Pickering and Chatto, forthcoming 2013), 115–35. On Jane Franklin, see also Francis Spufford, *I May be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 94–149. On the public role played by Franklin’s first wife, see Janice Cavell, “Miss Porden, Mrs. Franklin and the Arctic Expeditions: Eleanor Anne Porden and the Construction of Arctic Heroism (1818–25),” in *Arctic Exploration*, 79–94. On the criticism meted out by biographers to the strong-minded wife of Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott, see Janice Cavell, “Manliness in the Life and Posthumous Reputation of Robert Falcon Scott,” *Canadian Journal of History* 45, no. 3 (2010): 537–64, on 558–61. Robert Peary’s wife, Josephine, is studied in Linda S. Bergmann, “Woman Against a Background of White: The Representation of Self and Nature in Women’s Arctic Narratives,” *American Studies* 34, no. 2 (1993): 53–68; and Heidi Hansson, “Feminine Poles: Josephine Diebitsch-Peary’s and Jennie Darlington’s Polar Narratives,” in *Cold Matters: Cultural Perceptions of Snow, Ice and Cold*, eds. Heidi Hansson and Cathrine Norberg (Umeå, Sweden: Umeå University / Royal Skyttean Society, 2009), 105–24.
- 23 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 17, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 8 November 1923.
- 24 See envelope in LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 12, file 3, and *ibid.*, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to Bartlett, 18 March 1925.
- 25 Belle once expostulated with a government official about the restrictions placed on the scientists and was told: “My dear lady, the function of governments is not to quarrel with people, but to render decisions.” She took the point, and thereafter emphasized to her correspondents that “no one has any right to speak up ... but [the] families.” *Ibid.*, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 26 September 1924.
- 26 On popular interest in commemoration of the war, see Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).
- 27 See Brian S. Osborne, “Figuring Space, Marking Time: Contested Identities in Canada,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, nos.1–2 (1996): 23–40, on 36.

- 28 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 17, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 25 February 1924.
- 29 Ibid., vol. 7, file 13, Stefansson to Belle Anderson, 16 February 1915.
- 30 Ibid., vol. 4, file 9, Rudolph Anderson to Belle Allstrand, 19 April 1908.
- 31 Ibid., vol. 31, files 1-1-106 and 5-1-107, clippings.
- 32 Ibid., vol. 7, file 7, Rudolph Anderson to Belle Anderson, 28 June 1914.
- 33 See *ibid.*, vol. 10, file 4, Rudolph Anderson, "The Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913–1918: Preliminary History."
- 34 Ibid., vol. 7, file 11, John R. Cox to Belle Anderson, 7 July 1914.
- 35 See "Stefansson Off For Arctic Quest," *New York Times* (26 May 1913), 2; "Stefansson Talks Of Arctic Plans," *Globe* (Toronto) (30 May 1913), 1; "Stefansson Hopes to Achieve Success," *Globe* (18 June 1913), 1. See also Trevor H. Levere, "Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Continental Shelf, and a New Arctic Continent," *British Journal for the History of Science* 12, no. 2 (1988): 233–47.
- 36 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 20 June 1924; Rudolph Anderson, "Preliminary History."
- 37 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 12, file 5, Belle Anderson, memo, June 1922.
- 38 The accounts by Anderson and others regarding Stefansson's lack of concern about the men on the *Karluk* are substantiated by Stefansson's report to G.J. Desbarats, 1 January 1914, LAC, RG 42, vol. 476, file 84-2-29, part 2. After the expedition, a new acquaintance reported with astonishment that he showed no emotion whatever when speaking of their deaths. Royal Geographical Society Archives, CB8/80, Arthur Hinks to Frank Debenham, 12 April 1920.
- 39 See Diubaldo, *Stefansson*, 86–93, 104.
- 40 LAC, RG 42, vol. 477, file 84-2-29, part 5, Stefansson to Desbarats, 7 January 1919, and enclosure (copy of Anderson to Bowman, 6 November 1918).
- 41 Stefansson, "The Friendly Arctic" (letter to the editor), *Science* 57, no. 1474 (30 March 1923): 368–9, on 369. See also LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 3, file 7, Rudolph Anderson to Charles Camsell, 11 May 1923, and *ibid.*, vol. 9, file 17, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 5 January 1924. With regard to his letter to Bowman (which Stefansson had distributed very widely), Rudolph told Camsell that "If Mr. Stefansson wished to advertise my personal opinion of him, it was done by himself and not by me." Although Anderson's letter was very injudiciously worded, the claims he made in it — most notably, that Stefansson was attempting to shift the blame for the *Karluk* disaster to Bartlett — were true, and Bowman immediately wrote to Stefansson warning him against attacks on Bartlett. RSCL, Stefansson MSS 98, vol. 4, file 20, Bowman to Stefansson, 13 November 1918.
- 42 Diubaldo accepts Stefansson's claim that he patiently tolerated much abuse, but eventually was forced to defend himself in print against the "extreme vilification" to which Rudolph Anderson subjected him (*Stefansson*, 197).

However, it is clear that Stefansson's campaign against Anderson long predated *The Friendly Arctic*. For example, see various letters and memos from Stefansson to Desbarats in LAC, RG 42, vols. 476 and 477, file 84-2-29, parts 2-6. In 1920-1921 Stefansson attempted to have the Polar Medal awarded to himself and a selected few of the men he felt were most loyal to him. As he observed, the omission of the scientists "would be taken as a definite censure of them." (No medals were ever awarded to any members of the CAE.) See LAC, RG 42, vol. 489, file 84-2-45 and RG 25, vol. 251, file N.11/88, Stefansson to Desbarats, 15 December 1920; Desbarats to W.L. Griffith, 3 May 1921; and other correspondence. In partial exoneration of Stefansson, Anderson himself noted that much of the trouble was caused by another expedition scientist, Frits Johansen. According to Anderson, Johansen tried to curry favour with Stefansson by repeating all critical comments made in private conversations by the other scientists, which "made [Stefansson] wild, or helped to do so." LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 3, file 12, Rudolph Anderson to Bartlett, 24 January 1925.

- 43 See Janice Cavell and Jeff Noakes, *Acts of Occupation: Canada and Arctic Sovereignty, 1918-25* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 189.
- 44 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 3, file 12, Rudolph Anderson to Bartlett, 22 April 1925. See also Cavell and Noakes, 150, 156, 190-1.
- 45 See Cavell and Noakes, 201-2.
- 46 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 7, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 31 May 1922.
- 47 Ibid., vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 3 July 1924. Well aware of the risks for women of publicly intervening in Arctic controversies, Belle later warned her friend that if she ever decided to publish a statement blaming Stefansson for Allan's death, it must be signed by her husband as well. "Don't risk being called a hysterical mother who cannot see things straight for prejudice, etc. You know the line of argument [Stefansson's supporters] would use," she wrote. Ibid., vol. 9, file 19, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 13 May 1925.
- 48 LAC, RG 42, vol. 471, file 84-2-5 sub 49, David Anderson to Alexander Johnston, 16 March 1925. David Anderson (father of the *Karluk's* first mate, Alexander Anderson) was not part of Belle and Rudolph's correspondence network.
- 49 Ibid., vol. 468, file 84-2-5 sub 10, Bell, Bannerman & Finlay, on behalf of the brother of Alistair Forbes Mackay, 22 December 1924.
- 50 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 16 October 1924.
- 51 Ibid., vol. 3, file 11, Belle Anderson to Rudolph Anderson, 17 October 1924.
- 52 Ibid., RG 24, vol. 5672, file 84-2-1, Rudolph Anderson to Desbarats, 4 November 1924; *ibid.*, RMA/MBAA, vol. 3, file 11, Belle Anderson to Rudolph Anderson, 21 October 1924.

- 53 See *ibid.*, RG 42, vol. 473, file 84-2-11, part 2, McVeigh, memo for Desbarats, 9 April 1923, and memo for chairman of Arctic Biological Committee, 27 April 1923; *ibid.*, vol. 477, file 84-2-29, part 6, correspondence between Stefansson and McVeigh, December 1923–February 1924.
- 54 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to Ernest de Koven Leffingwell, 25 April 1925.
- 55 *Ibid.*, vol. 12, file 4, Belle Anderson memo book; *ibid.*, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 April 1925; *ibid.*, RG 42, vol. 490, file 84-2-54, part 1, McVeigh to Arthur Doughty, 26 January 1925.
- 56 *Ibid.*, RG 42, vol. 465, file 84-2-3, part 4, Stefansson to Desbarats, 23 February 1920, and enclosure (Hadley to Stefansson, undated). An edited version of this account, with the strongest criticisms omitted, was later published in Stefansson's *The Friendly Arctic* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 704–22. Stefansson's attempts to influence the historical record in his own favour are too numerous to list. To give but one example, former prime minister Arthur Meighen deeply resented the way in which Stefansson publicly misrepresented his government's Arctic policies. (See Cavell and Noakes, 223–4). When Stefansson heard that historian Roger Graham was writing a biography of Meighen, he informed Graham that Meighen had asked him to provide the true, secret story of his dealings with the government during Meighen's time in power (1920–1921). LAC, MG 30 B97, Trevor Lloyd Papers, vol. 1, file 11, Stefansson, memo to Stefansson Collection staff, 9 July 1954, and attached copies of correspondence. Since Graham's book contains no such material, it must be assumed that he consulted Meighen on the matter and was warned about Stefansson's untruthfulness.
- 57 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 April 1925. See also *ibid.*, vol. 3, file 12, Rudolph Anderson to Robert Bartlett, 22 and 23 April 1925.
- 58 *Ibid.*, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 April 1925.
- 59 *Ibid.*, Belle Anderson to Alice Malloch, 17 April 1925.
- 60 "What sorrow not to be able to write on his tomb: Close to the friends he chose, let him sleep his last sleep on the spot to which his destiny and his love for science led him." LAC, RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, Memo and attached letter (Élisabeth Beuchat to Belle Anderson, 11 November 1924), enclosed in F.A. McGregor to Charles Stewart, 17 February 1925.
- 61 Desbarats had been interviewed by the far more sympathetic Camsell on Belle's behalf. LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 12, file 4, Belle Anderson memo book.
- 62 *Ibid.*, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 April 1925.
- 63 Cavell and Noakes, 211, 212–13, 232–3.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 109–111, 184–94, 222–5, 231–4.
- 65 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 18, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 21 November 1924.
- 66 *Ibid.*, file 19, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 9 March 1925.

MRS. RUDOLPH ANDERSON AND THE CANADIAN ARCTIC
EXPEDITION MEMORIAL

- 67 Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, "The Politics of Selection: The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the Imperial Commemoration of Canadian History, 1919–1950," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* ns 17, no. 1 (2006): 125–50, on 135.
- 68 See Pelletier; C.J. Taylor, "Some Early Problems of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (1983): 3–24; Shannon Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework," *Public Historian* 18, no. 3 (1996): 23–41; and Roger Marsters, "'The Battle of Grand Pré': The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the Commemoration of Acadian History," *Acadiensis* 36, no. 1 (2006): 29–50. On other northern commemorations, see David Neufeld, "Parks Canada and the Commemoration of the North," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2001), 45–75.
- 69 Belle was highly suspicious of a plan by the Maurer and Knight families to place a memorial on Wrangel Island, believing that Stefansson's sovereignty ambitions were likely behind the idea. (Fred Maurer and Lorne Knight were among the three American casualties of Stefansson's private expedition to Wrangel.) LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 17, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 16 February, 27 May, 9 June, and 20 June 1924.
- 70 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, F.W. Howay to Harkin, 17 March 1925.
- 71 Ibid., Johnston to W.W. Cory, 14 May 1925.
- 72 Ibid., RG 42, vol. 463, file 84-2-1, Belle Anderson to McVeigh, 6 April 1925.
- 73 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, Extract from minutes of meeting, 19 May 1925.
- 74 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 12, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 April 1925.
- 75 See *ibid.*, William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers, MG26 J1, vol. 129, King to Helen Crawford, 18 July 1925.
- 76 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1358, file HS9-35, King to Stewart, 17 July 1925.
- 77 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 14, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 30 March 1926.
- 78 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, J.B. Hunter to W.W. Cory, 23 January 1926.
- 79 On the official attitude to Bernier during the 1920s, see Janice Cavell, "Further Evidence and Reflections on Joseph Elzéar Bernier's 1907 and 1909 Sector Claims," *Polar Record*, First View Articles.
- 80 After McKinlay's death, the original Hadley diary was donated to the Public Archives of Canada. It is now in LAC, MG30 B25, vol. 2.
- 81 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 9, file 19, Belle Anderson to Helen Crawford, 4 February 1925. Sadly, in 1953 Helen Crawford took the documents back and their present location is unknown.

- 82 Osborne, 25. See also Steven Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5, no. 3 (2004): 347–55.
- 83 LAC, RG 25, vol. 1348, file 1238-25, O.D. Skelton, memo for King, 7 December 1925.
- 84 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 14, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 30 March 1926.
- 85 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, Arthur Pinard, memo, 26 April 1926.
- 86 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 14, Belle Anderson to Bartlett, 16 May 1926.
- 87 "These proofs of remembrance do good to suffering hearts." Ibid., RG 42, vol. 478, file 84-2-32, part 3, Élisabeth Beuchat to Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 15 juin 1926.
- 88 Ibid., RG 84, vol. 1393, file HS10-30, McVeigh to Harkin, 10 July 1926. For an example of how the announcement of a memorial helped to placate relatives who might otherwise have made inconvenient demands, see *ibid.*, RG 42, vol. 471, file 84-2-5 sub 49, Alexander Johnston to David Anderson, 1 April 1925, and David Anderson to Johnston, 6 May 1925; *ibid.*, vol. 478, file 84-2-32 part 3, David Anderson to Johnston, 10 June 1926. Other responses can also be found in file 84-2-32.
- 89 *Ottawa Citizen* and *Ottawa Journal* (26 April 1926).
- 90 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 14, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 5 March, 1 June, and 26 October 1926; McKinlay to Belle Anderson, 17 March and 18 May 1926; *ibid.*, file 15, McKinlay to Belle Anderson, 5 January 1927.
- 91 Diubaldo's explanation of why no official narrative was published (*Stefansson*, 202–3) misses several key points because it is based only on the Department of Marine and Fisheries files, not on the Anderson papers.
- 92 See *ibid.*, 206.
- 93 See Cavell and Noakes, 221–2. See also LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 3, file 12, Rudolph Anderson to William F. Riley, 13 June 1925.
- 94 Ibid., vol. 7, file 5, Rudolph Anderson to Fred J. Poynter, 13 April 1952.
- 95 Ibid., file 1, Rudolph Anderson to William F. Riley, 27 August 1950.
- 96 See LAC, RG 84, vol. 1318, file HS8-24, correspondence and other documents.
- 97 Ibid., RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 15, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 21 June 1927.
- 98 Ibid., vol. 7, file 14, McKinlay to Belle Anderson, 31 March 1915. On McKinlay's traumatic experiences in the Arctic, see his *Karluk: The Untold Story of Arctic Exploration* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976).
- 99 LAC, RMA/MBAA, vol. 8, file 15, Belle Anderson to McKinlay, 23 March 1927.