

BARTLETT'S STORY OF THE KARLUK; JUMPED FROM SHIP AS SHE SANK; DOUBTS ICE DRIFT ACROSS THE POLE.

Commander Sends to
The Times Details of
the Arctic Disaster.

SHIP WENT DOWN JAN. 11

Had Been Making Zigzag Jour-
neys with Floes Ever
Since Sept. 20.

LOST 60 MILES FROM SHORE

Crew Established "Camp Ship-
wreck" on the Ice and
Lived in Comfort There.

THEN CAME HUNT FOR LAND

Most of Crew Found Refuge on
Wrangel Island and Bartlett
Started for Help

THROUGH GALES TO SIBERIA

Dogs Perished on His Perilous Trip
Across One Hundred Miles
of Ice.

By CAPT. ROBERT A. BARTLETT,
Commander of the Whaler Karluk, Flag-
ship of the Stefansson Arctic
Exploring Expedition.

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ST. MICHAEL, Alaska, May 31.—

Commander Vilhjalmur Stefansson of
the Canadian Government's Arctic
Exploring Expedition left the flag-
ship, Karluk, on Sept. 20, 1913, fifteen
miles off the mouth of the Colville
River. The next day a strong east
wind sprang up, and on Sept. 23 the
ship began to drift westward. There
was no open water in the vicinity, and
it was impossible to extricate the
ship. On Sept. 25 we were struck
by more easterly gales, accompanied
by a blinding snowstorm.

From the masthead at noon, during
a let-up in the storm, I caught sight
of land at Cape Halket. The ice
was cracking and tearing around us,
and many larger cakes were ground-
ing. During our rapid drift over the
shallow bottom we seemed to be
bearing a charmed existence, mov-
ing along with an ice floe about two
miles square and fearing momentarily
a break-up of the floe.

Accordingly we took the dogs aboard
the Karluk from the ice and placed
provisions on the deck, in readiness
to go overboard immediately on the
possibility of the ship's breaking in
the crushing ice. That seemed a very
imminent possibility, and in a less
staunch vessel would have befallen
then and there.

Carried by Grinding Ice.

It was a magnificent sight, the ice
grinding and crushing and tearing
asunder around us and rearing high on
end. I longed then for my former
command, Peary's north pole ship, the
Roosevelt, which had carried me so
often through greater dangers.

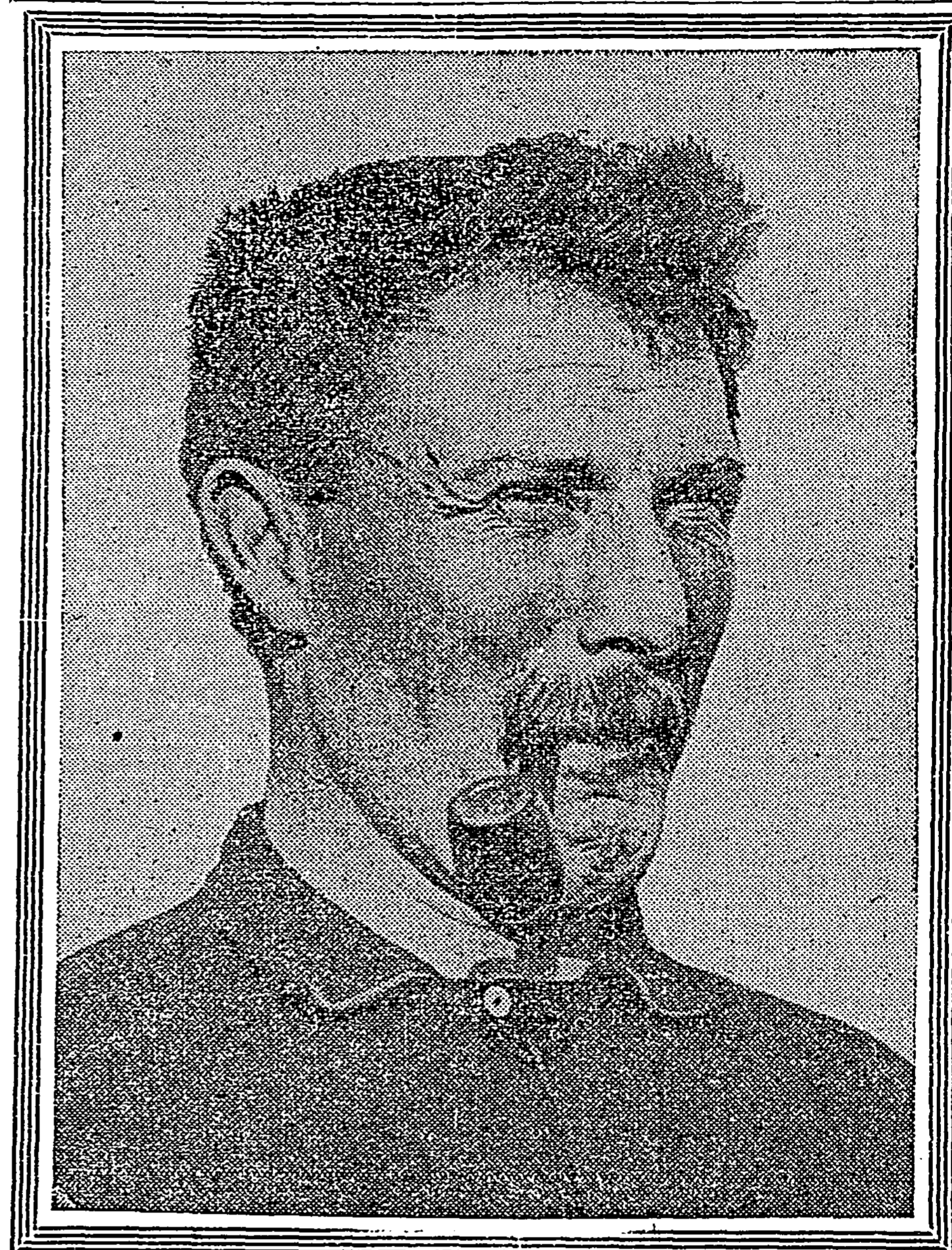
On Sept. 26 the wind veered to the
northwest, closing all leads between
the ship and shore, and leaving us in
a position six miles off Tangent Point.

There we were becalmed for three
days. In those three days we made
careful preparations for leaving the
ship, as soon as it might become neces-
sary, making ready fur clothing and
sledges for journeys ashore. On Sept.
29 the wind changed to the north-
east, and we began drifting westward.
It was remarkable that we escaped at
this time among the many grounded
bergs around us.

On Oct. 3 we were close to a sandspit
across Dease Inlet. The wind fresh-
ened to a gale, and before it the Kar-
luk drifted westward. On Oct. 4 the
weather changed southeasterly and
we drifted northwest. On Oct. 6 we
were twenty-five miles off shore and
were drifting rapidly north outside
the twenty-fathom line.

The dredge at this point showed a
distinct change in the character of the
sea animal life. Our Eskimos, who
were busy catching seals, began mak-
ing images of Peary. The Nome
sledges were found too heavy now, in
case we were obliged to leave the ship,
and were deemed not suitable for
rough ice work. The character of the
sea bottom had here changed from
soft silt to shell and coral rock.

On Oct. 7 a stellar observation
showed our position to be latitude 71
degrees 38 minutes, longitude 154 de-
grees 5 minutes. We continued drift-
ing north until Oct. 10, going rapidly
over the Continental slope. At 500



Capt. Robert A. Bartlett.

fathoms we could find no bottom. At
noon of Oct. 11 the Lucas sounding
machinery found bottom in mud and
sank 1,000 fathoms down.

In the evening of that day the ice
cracked 100 yards away from the
Karluk. We made preparations to re-
lease the ship by means of dynamite
at daylight. But on Oct. 12 the lead
was closed. At 1,250 fathoms we tried
the dredge, but without success in the
deep water. We made it heavier by
one-sixteenth and at 1,175 fathoms we
obtained star fish and other species of
sea life hitherto unknown in the
arctic.

We continued drifting northwest
until Oct. 22, when the nearest point
should have been Keenan's Land,
about twenty miles south of our posi-
tion. Although we remained in the
vicinity for several days in clear
weather, there was no sign of land, in
spite of a constant search kept up
from the crew's nest by various mem-
bers of the expedition with glasses.
Outside of the continental shelf, if
land exists at all, it has probably been
wrongly placed on the maps. In this
locality we continued getting many
seals.

Bear Tracks and, Finally, a Bear.

Gales from the northwest sent the
ship southward. On Oct. 24 soundings
showed a depth of 1,100 fathoms, and
a strong south wind sent the Karluk
north again. On Oct. 26 the ice began
to form rafters near the ship, but did
no damage. We saw bear tracks on
the ice around us.

On Oct. 27 we blew down our boiler.
Three days later, on Oct. 30, the ice
suddenly cracked with a loud report
from the stern of the ship, and a lead
opened fifty feet from the port side,
separating the ship from our dogs.
We succeeded, however, in getting
our dogs aboard, and also our sound-
ing machine. The open lead soon
closed, and there was no lateral move-
ment. All hands stayed up, as the
wind was blowing a furious hurricane,
verging to the east.

On Nov. 1 we encountered shallow
water again at 100 fathoms, using
always at that depth our Kelvin
machine. In deeper water we used the
Lucas sounding machine. We lost
our dredge with 700 fathoms of rope,
at this stage.

On Nov. 5 we placed on the ice
250 sacks of coal, 100 cases of bis-
cuits, and various other articles we
would need after leaving the ship,
using the biscuit cases for the con-
struction of a house to shelter us.

On Nov. 10 we shot our first bear.
The sun left us on Nov. 11, when the
water was calm and the ship practi-
cally stationary. But the prevailing
easterly winds kept the Karluk go-
ing constantly westward. No cur-
rent was observed in any direction.
Apparently the ice movements are
influenced only by winds. In my
opinion the prevailing winter winds
are from northeast to east.

Questions Polar Drift Theory.

The theory of drifting across the
pole is questionable. Our drift carried
the ship to the point where the
Jeanette began her drift, as a glance
at the chart shows. The Jeanette, if
not lost, probably would have taken
the course of the Fram. It is possi-
ble that there is adjoining land in an
unexplored region.

On Nov. 13, in latitude nearly 73
degrees, longitude 162, we found
much animal life. This is the farthest
point north which we reached. Fif-
teen miles to the west the sea bot-
tom was all rocks, and there was no
animal life. Soundings taken in this

locality showed forty-eight fathoms.

In the latter part of the month the
Eskimos caught five white foxes. On
Nov. 22 the dredge brought up eleven
species of animal life not previously
known.

On this day the Yale-Harvard game
was to be played. We wondered who
won.

On Nov. 24 there was considerable
twilight, and we could read figures
on the transit without the use of a
lantern. Malloch was untiring in his
efforts to get observations. West
winds now sent the ship rapidly to
the southeast, showing the probability
of water in that direction.

Thanksgiving Day was not observed
by us, the Karluk being a Canadian
ship, but my thoughts strayed to
Boston and the kind friends with
whom there I had in the past partici-
pated on the great American holiday.

The drift continued south and south-
west until Dec. 15. More easterly
winds took us off westward for the
rest of the time.

Christmas Day was spent by us with
an old-fashioned celebration, with
sporting events on the ice and prizes
given to the winners. In the even-
ing we had a big banquet.

New Year's Eve, 1913, found us
about sixty miles north by east of
Herald Island. We had observed
what appeared to be land, looming
south by west, at twilight. At noon
of New Year's Day, 1914, we celebrat-
ed with a big football match between
all nations and Scotland, and the
festivities continued in the evening.

On Jan. 2 the ship and the ice
were both stationary. Suddenly a
rumbling of ice like the buzzing of
a telephone wire was heard in the in-
terior of the ship, but not a sound of
it could be observed on deck. Evi-
dently there was great pressure
somewhere.

At 3 o'clock on the morning of Jan.
10 we were awakened from sleep by
a sharp report like that of a gun. The
ship was trembling and quivering.
Going on deck, we found that the ice
had opened from the stern of the
vessel, running in a westerly direction
about 100 yards, where the crack had
closed. Soon the ice sheet started to
the side and began moving in an
easterly direction, slowly leaving the
ship stationary with ice on her port
side.

Water Pours Into Engine Room.

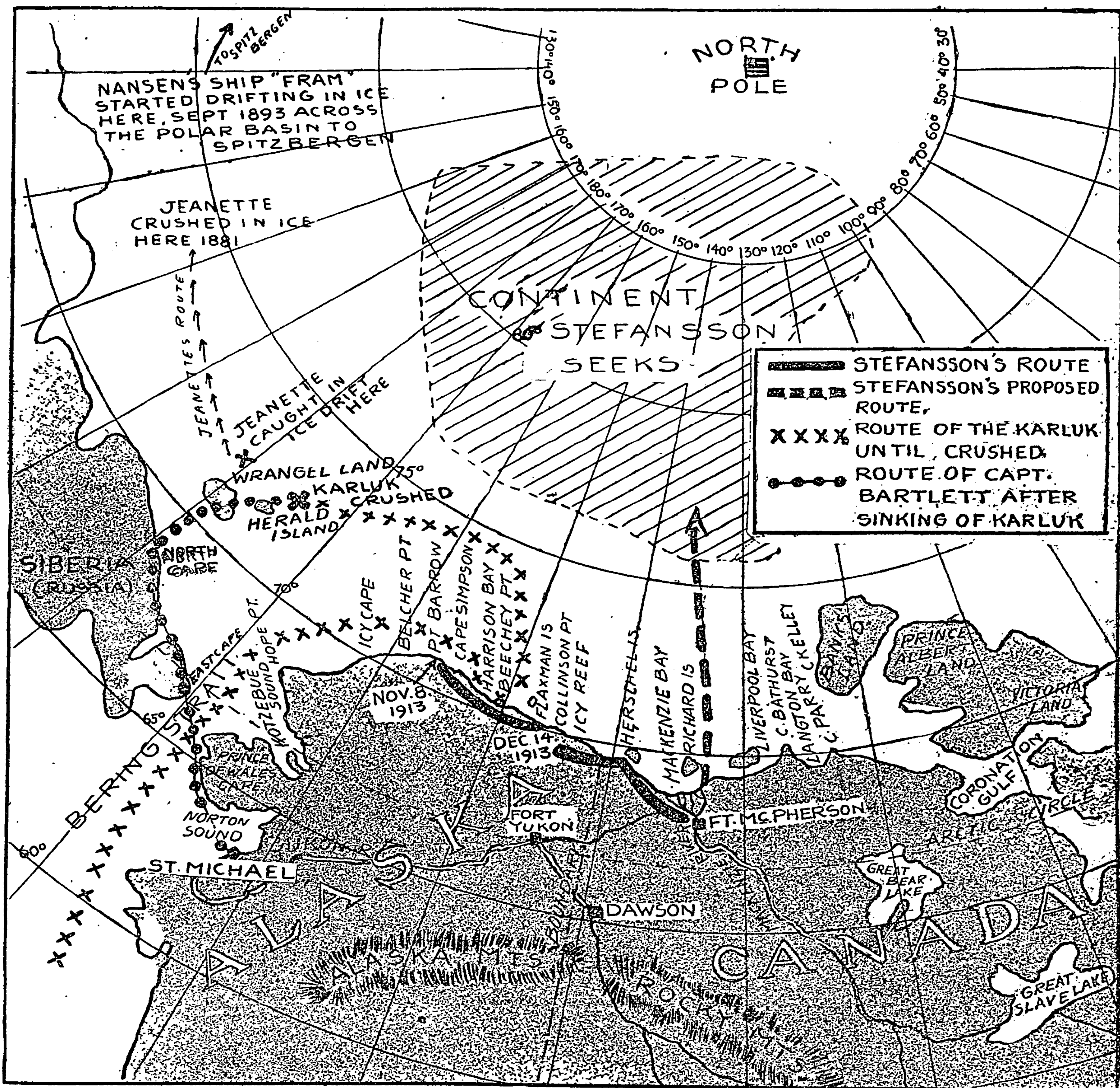
There was no pressure until 7:30
o'clock in the evening. The wind,
which in the early part of the day had
been light to the north, increased as
the day wore on to a strong gale,
with blinding snow. At this time a
corner of the ice sheet struck the ship
abreast of the engine room, breaking
several of her timber planks. The
pressure was not great, but water be-
gan to pour into the engine room at
once.

Realizing that the Karluk was
doomed, we immediately began placing
on the ice pemican which had been
taken from cases sewn in canvas; also
milk, clothing, ammunition, arms, oil,
&c. The night was intensely dark.
No moon, no stars were visible. The
air was filled with driving snow, fly-
ing before the wind at fully forty
miles an hour. Fortunately, although
the off-side ice continued moving
slowly eastward, the pressure had
largely lessened by the meeting of the
two points astern. If we had received
the full pressure of the ice, it would
have cut off the bottom of the ship
clean and complete.

The men aboard worked heroically.

Continued on Page 4.

Progress of the Karluk Until It Was Crushed in the Ice



BARTLETT'S STORY OF KARLUK'S LOSS

Continued from Page 1.

doing as much in one hour as ordinarily in six. Ten thousand pounds of pemican and other provisions were placed on the ice. The ice around the ship was badly broken, but notwithstanding the dangerous condition in the darkness, the men began hauling supplies on sledges to the solid ice pan a hundred yards away, where loomed the house and the other articles we had previously placed there. Into the house we sent an Eskimo woman with her baby, telling her to make a fire in the stove, in preparation for our arrival and settling there.

We could have saved practically everything from the ship. Realizing, however, the necessities of arctic rations, and that pemican, biscuit, tea, and milk were sufficient, we left the delicacies aboard the ship. Of our personal belongings, very few were saved.

At 10:45 o'clock that night eleven feet of water had got into the engine room. The ice was holding the ship up for a time, and little water came in. By midnight all the supplies had been placed on solid ice. The coffee kettle was boiling constantly in the galley.

Karluk Sank on Jan. 11.

At this time I sent the men to the shelter house. I remained on the ship until it sank at 4:30 o'clock on the afternoon of Jan. 11.

The Karluk sank in thirty-eight fathoms of water. The ice surrounding the ship had kept her afloat heretofore, but when she was full of water the bow sank first. As the water began pouring down the main hatch I jumped from the rail to the ice and saw the Karluk go down.

The weather had now moderated considerably, and much light began to show to the westward. I stood on the ice, surrounded by the officers and crew of the expedition, who lifted their hats, saying, one and all: "Adios, Karluk!"

We watched the final plunge, with the blue ensign at her main topmast cutting the water as she disappeared beneath.

We had two houses on the ice—one of snow, the other built of boxes cov-

ered with sails. All the mattresses had been saved from the ship, and every man jack had a good bed of skins and blankets. There was a stove in each house, and plenty of coal to keep things warm. We had a very comfortably constructed galley, with a large stove, regular meals, and good food.

It Was Camp Shipwreck.

We called it Camp Shipwreck.

We decided that as soon as the sun returned, giving us five hours a day for travel, to commence transporting our supplies to land. About sixty miles away, south by west, there appeared land, but owing to much mirage, it seemed too large for Herald Island, and we supposed it to be Wrangel Island instead.

On Jan. 20 I sent Mate Anderson, Second Mate Barker, and two sailors, with three months' provisions and a good supply of ammunition, to look for a game land, and also to make a trail for facilitating the removal of supplies of the main party toward shore. Every one was busy making skin clothes, the Eskimo woman cutting the garments and the men sewing them.

My plan was to keep the men employed all the time, although I decided to wait until the middle of February, when we should have longer days, before moving on. Some of the scientists of the party were impatient to start, fearing that otherwise we would drift north.

The supporting party, accompanying the mates, consisted of Mamem, (the assistant geographer,) Eskimos, and twenty dogs and three sledges, returned on the third day, reporting that they had encountered fairly good ice, with little movement. They accompanied the mates to within three miles of land on Jan. 31. This land proved to be Herald Island. Open water prevented a landing at that time. Wrangel Island, thirty-eight miles from Herald Island, was not sighted by the supporting party.

On Feb. 7 I sent Mamem and two chat, (Dr. A. Forbes Mackay, medical man of the expedition; James Murray, the ocean current expert, and Henri Beauchat, the anthropologist of the party,) and Sailor Morris, who were impatient to get to land, left us, using man-power sledges for travel, with the same methods that were employed in the British antarctic expedition, and following the trail of the supporting party.

On Feb. 7 I sent Mamem and two Eskimos with sledges and supplies to

land. Mamem injured his leg on this trip and returned to camp, his place being taken by Chafe, who was advancing with supplies along the trail.

Chafe found open water within three miles of Herald Island. Seeing none of the men on the island, he presumed that they had gone on to Wrangel Island, and, according to his instructions, he returned, caching supplies along the trail. On the day the party returned a strong easterly wind sent the ice westward.

Party Reaches Wrangel Island.

In the latter part of the month all left camp for land, picking up supplies along the trail and reaching Wrangel Island on Feb. 13, landing on an ice spit there.

Here we found plenty of driftwood, and the Eskimo woman prepared fire for us. She carried along her baby and the ship's cat, which had also been saved when we landed.

On Feb. 17 Monroe and two men left for Camp Shipwreck, in order to fetch additional supplies. We now had with us eighty-six days' provisions for each man of the party. The eight of our men who had previously left Camp Shipwreck had not yet arrived at Wrangel Island at that time, but we were expecting them daily.

Bartlett Starts for Siberia.

Realizing the necessity of immediate relief for the men on Wrangel Island, I left on Feb. 18 for the Siberian shore, 100 miles away, accompanied by Eskimos and Perry, with a sledge and seven dogs. Four bears had been shot on the trail on our way to Wrangel, and plenty of bear signs near the island showed that there was a possibility of an abundance of game.

We reached the mainland, fifty miles west of Cape North. Gale after gale, sweeping down upon us and moving the ice, had delayed us in crossing Long Sound, and when we reached the mainland only four of our dogs had survived the trip. We met with very kind treatment at the hands of the natives along the coast to East Cape, where we encountered Baron Kleist. He greeted us warmly and with great kindness offered us the hospitality of his house at Emma Harbor, the chances being greater that we would meet a whaler there than elsewhere.

I arrived at Emma Harbor in the middle of May, when Capt. Peterson of the whaler Herman, hearing of my plight from the natives, voluntarily gave up his whaling and trading trip and called for me at Emma Harbor. From there we started immediately for the American coast. There was

too much ice to permit of our landing at Nome, so we came on to St. Michael.

Capt. Peterson is certainly to be commended for his kindness and for his prompt action, as well as for the steps he has taken to ease the minds of our friends in America and get through information to the Canadian Government, so that relief may be sent to the crew now marooned on Wrangel Island. ROBERT A. BARTLETT.

Capt. Bartlett's Valuable Data.

Capt. Bartlett's story supplies interesting data about the most important scientific problem which the Stefansson expedition was to solve—the course taken by the drift ice from the northern coast of Alaska. This path, which has long been a matter of conjecture to scientists, heretofore has been theoretically charted on the basis of the drifts of a few arctic ships in those regions. Capt. Bartlett in his account alludes to two of these, the Jeanette and the Fram.

The Karluk drifted from Beachey Point to the vicinity of Herald Island. The ill-fated ship Jeanette, in 1880 and 1881, drifted from the vicinity of Herald Island to the De Long Islands, northeast of New Siberia Island, from 175 degrees west longitude to about 155 degrees, about 30 degrees. The Fram, Nansen's vessel, was similarly frozen in the ice pack on Sept. 22, 1893, northwest of New Siberia Island, and drifted all the way across the Polar Basin to Spitzbergen, emerging from the ice in August, 1896, and sailing thence to Tromsø, Norway. Thus each of the three vessels that studied the northern ice drift was borne in substantially the same path.

The Karluk was crushed in the ice almost at the same point where the Jeanette was caught. The Jeanette was crushed in the ice in the parallel of latitude and not very far west from where the Karluk was frozen in the pack. The natural question arising was: If the Karluk had continued to drift, would she have taken the same course as the Jeanette, and if the Jeanette had not been crushed would she have taken approximately the same course as the Fram, toward Spitzbergen? If the natural drift of the arctic ice is across the polar basin from the Alaskan shores northward to the pole, the Karluk took no such course.

Capt. Bartlett says it is questionable that the drift is across the north pole. The Jeanette, he says, if it had escaped crushing, would probably have taken the same course as the Fram.

He speaks also of the possibility of unexplored land, which may be the real reason why both the Karluk and the Jeanette, instead of drifting toward the pole, followed courses around the polar basin.