



Ships of Wood and Men of Iron: A Norwegian-Canadian Saga of Exploration in the High Arctic

Gerard Kenney

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In the barren lands of Canada far north of the Arctic circle, summers are quick and cool, mere short interruptions in the true business of the polar regions, winter. Winters there can be dangerous with temperatures that plunge to awesome depths during the long, lonely hours of Arctic darkness. Powerful blizzards shriek across the land for days at a time, causing all animal life to seek shelter from the cutting blast, essentially putting a temporary end to normal activities of life, such as travelling and eating. It is an unforgiving land that does not easily suffer fools.

Over 100 years ago, in June 1898, Captain Otto Sverdrup and 15 crewmen put out to sea aboard the schooner *Fram* from the Norwegian city today known as Oslo. When they returned to Norway four years later, they came back with a record of geographic and scientific discovery, the richness of which is unparalleled in the annals of Arctic exploration. The first section of this book is the story of those four heroic years spent in the High Arctic and their impact on Canadas subsequent efforts to ensure Canadian sovereignty in the area of the Norwegian discoveries.

The second section of the book deals with the Canadian Arctic expeditions between 1903 and 1948, led by intrepid men such as A.P. Low, Joseph E. Bernier, Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Henry Larsen.

"For anyone interested in the recent history of the Canadian North and why we even call it the Canadian North *Ships of Wood and Men of Iron* is a must read. Kenney persuasively nominates a shortlist of new national heroes for a country badly in need of them."

- Randy Boswell, CanWest News Service

"In my view, this book will be an important document about Canada-Norway relations in the North, especially considering the increased international emphasis now on circumpolar relations in the North."

- Shirley Wolff Serafini, Canadian Ambassador to Norway

"This book is a well deserved recognition of one of Norways most famous polar explorers and his invaluable contributions to the exploration and development of science in the Canadian Arctic. **Gerard Kenney's** book also sheds an interesting new light on the history of the final settlement of Norways territorial claim of the Sverdrup Islands."

- Ingvard Havnen, former Norwegian Ambassador to Canada

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