

Montreal, P.Q.
September 1965

A HIGHLY PERSONAL COMMENTARY ON THE ROLE OF THE ARCTIC INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA
IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES -- A REVIEW OF THE WORK OF DR. GEORGE W. ROGERS, BY HIMSELF

When I undertook the assignment of attempting to determine the role the Arctic Institute of North America should assume in relation to social sciences research, it became apparent that very few of the members of the Institute family were fully aware that they had been involved over a period of eleven years in a comprehensive and highly experimental program based in Alaska and focusing primarily upon economic development but related to other regions and disciplines. This is the Institute's overall administrative direction and shared financial support of my research and related activities from July 1, 1956 to date. A review of this story seemed to me appropriate at this time of rethinking of the future courses the Institute should follow. It affords a case study in the genesis, organization, launching, conduct and accomplishments of an actual program which might be of value in formulating recommendations for further programs.

The full story could be dredged up and assembled from the past eleven or more years' files of correspondence, progress reports, administrative and accounting memoranda and, to some extent, the card catalogue in the Institute library, but this would become a major research job in itself all out of proportion to its actual importance. The story can best be told, interpreted and evaluated by the persons who have been involved and, as the person who has been most intimately and continuously involved, the initial attempt should be made by me. Aside from the introductory and concluding sections which are the most personal, I will lapse from writing in the first person not out of an excess of modesty or pretensions of objectivity, but in the hopes that in so doing others may be encouraged to add their further commentary to what I say.

Genesis of the program

Accidents sometimes do happen and fair to good programs can be put together and launched rather quickly, but a truly successful research program is rarely if

ever brought into instant being by accident or design. Funding is basic, of course, and this requires a selling job to convince potential supporters that the research is worthwhile and that it has some relevance to their broader objectives in making money available. As important as it is, money is not all and recruiting appropriate research talent can present an even more difficult task. Except in the most routine types of projects, those performing the work must be more than simply technically competent. They must want to do what is proposed more than anything else that might be presenting itself at the time. As in the case of bringing the initial proposal into line with the objectives of the sources of funding, it is necessary to bring it into line with the long-run career considerations of the potential researchers.

The present program was many years in its formulation and progressed to its actual inception ^{in this manner} along at least three different but merging routes. From my point of view it might be said to have begun to stir while I was an undergraduate economics student as a compound of the typical undergraduate dissatisfactions with the relation of the traditional teachings of the discipline to the contemporary "real world", a lack of means to re-integrate the fragmented knowledge being acquired and a growing conviction that the proper place to launch a career based on the study of the social sciences was not "indoors" at a university (where you merely dealt with what other social scientists wrote), but to start outdoors from direct personal observations. Three professors whom I served as a research assistant, ^{encouraged me to search for} ~~aided my development of a~~ more congenial base for my future career, one by directing my attention toward the possible utility of the study of the abnormal as a means of gaining insights into the functioning of systems under "normal" conditions, and the other two to the promise of the study of regional entities as a means of integration. ~~This caused me to~~ ^{The} search for an economic "island" or frontier in which I would become involved and led to my employment in Alaska. By the mid-1950's I felt ready for a temporary withdrawal to review my experience, attempt to sort out what appeared to be meaningful patterns and strategic factors, etc. I was assisted in coming to a decision by a

political change in the national administration which abruptly terminated my career with the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Two other developments were taking place about the same time as my personal career was preparing to shift course. Following a conference on a mid-century look at the nation's natural resources, the Ford Foundation established a satellite foundation, Resources for the Future, Inc. to carry out research and educational activities concerned with the economic and social science aspects of natural resources matters. One of its major programs was devoted to regional studies as a means of devising new approaches and new inter-disciplinary combinations. Alaska and other parts of the north appeared as promising areas for experimentation. At the same time the Arctic Institute was going through one of its periods of re-evaluation and some of the staff members of the Washington office were beginning to formulate and promote a proposal for an inter-national and inter-disciplinary study of the development potentials and problems of northwest Canada and Alaska somewhat along the lines of the North Pacific study which had been started jointly by the United States and Canada during World War II but never carried through to completion.

I was not familiar with the inner workings of the Institute at the time, but the individuals who stood out in bringing these three sources together were Joseph Flakne of the Washington office staff and Dr. John Reed. They were sufficiently aware of the overlapping or common grounds of our separate purposes and desires to recognize the potential value of effecting a combination. Following a series of informal meetings it was suggested that the Arctic Institute make a formal application to RFF for the support of a program of social science research under their regional studies division. But this proved to be only a very tentative starting point.

Birth pangs are rarely easy and sometimes rather prolonged. Those of this program extended over a period of almost two years of intensive review and debate

within the Institute and discussion with the staff members of Resources for the Future, Inc. and other outside social scientists. A rather modest preliminary proposal was drafted and submitted by me which called for a two-man operation, myself and a Canadian partner, to become involved in our respective national northern territories in the manner I had envisaged earlier. After review within the Institute this emerged as a more ambitious and elaborate proposal which would have launched two multi-disciplinary teams on all of the known economic development problems of the North. As the sole source of financing, however, Resources for the Future had the last or next to last word and a highly flexible and experimental program was put forth which was closer to my original hopes and the purposes of their Regional Studies program. Support ^{was} on an instalment basis with continuation contingent upon results which could be justified under the broad terms of RFF objectives, ^{and} the initiative for proposing a future international expansion ^{was} being left with the Arctic Institute.

Organization, Support and Conduct of the Program

On July 1, 1956 Resources for the Future, Inc. made the first of a series of grant payments to the Arctic Institute of North America initially to retain Dr. George Rogers as a staff social scientist. In this capacity he was to ^{be} engaged in an inter-disciplinary regional study of the general phenomena of economic and natural resources development with Alaska as the subject region. Commencing April 1, 1962 the RFF grants were matched by AINA and July 1, 1962 by the University of Alaska. The primary objective of these grants was to carry out a basic research Program organized into three major phases, each looking at the general subject from different points of view. The first phase considered the southeast region of Alaska as a homogeneous region with a well-defined resource base and recognized development potential in which the social and public administration factors were strategic in conditioning the emerging economic development. The second phase looked at Alaska

as a whole focusing upon the event of the granting of statehood as a basic change in the political environment in which economic development was taking place. The third phase is concerned with the Bering Sea as a marine region in which Alaska has an important stake and concentrates on outside factors which determine the nature and course of development within a region.

The Arctic Institute and the University of Alaska were interested in the promotion of the phases of the primary objective as contributions to knowledge and understanding of Alaska and northern development, a demonstration of the value of these regions as laboratories for the social sciences and possibly as a means of creating a continuing career for Dr. Rogers as a northern-based social scientist. Resources for the Future shared these interests, but their support was justified by the highly experimental nature of the project and the prospect it afforded for devising and testing of new approaches, techniques and methodology for regional analysis and the gaining of new insights into the nature of the complex phenomena of economic and social change through the study in depth of a relatively simple and isolated region.

The initial meetings and the following extensive correspondence involving Dr. Rogers and Drs. Perlof and Fisher of RFF and Dr. Reed and Mr. Flame of AINA mapped not only the general course of the principal research effort, but secondary objectives to be served. Drawing principally upon Dr. Perlof's earlier experiences in Puerto Rico, it was agreed there should be an attempt to see that Rogers' activities and presence in Alaska fostered (1) some form of economic development planning effort on a continuing basis within the State government (at the time Territory government) and (2) the establishment of a center for basic and applied social science research at the University of Alaska. Because Rogers' research approach required personal involvement in the region and because of the difficulty of recruiting professional talent to meet the requirements of public and private programs and in the hope of attracting additional research to AINA, it was further agreed

that (3) he be allowed to take leave from the program from time to time to make his services available where appropriate and approved by RFF and AINA for short term projects, consulting services and teaching and lecture assignments.

Of the total 132 months between July 1, 1956 and June 30, 1967 the research grants supported 61 months and special contracts 71 months of Rogers' time (see table 1). A detailed study of the period April 1, 1962 - June 30, 1966 during which AINA contributed to the financial support of the project indicated that a considerable amount of these grant funds were devoted to promotion of the secondary objectives. Approximately 42% of the time "purchased" by these funds was devoted directly to the basic research project, 25% was indirectly related (i.e. preparation of special monographs and papers, lectures, etc.) and 35% was directly concerned with promotion of the secondary objectives. On the other hand, the non-grant sources of support contributed to the basic research effort by providing additional time for reflection and the background involvement essential to the approach being followed.

In the actual conduct of the work, an attempt was made to follow a pattern or rhythm repeated in each phase. This consisted of an incubation period of involvement in other matters in the region, collection of data and making observations related to the primary objectives ^{and performance of} preliminary organization and writing. The second period of more intensive research and final writing required partial withdrawal from day to day involvement in other activities, culminating in a few months complete withdrawal from Alaska to an outside center with a good reference library. The third movement in the pattern was a brief period of complete withdrawal into a non-research setting (e.g. the year as Carnegie Visiting Professor at the University of Alaska) for general reflection, appraisal and evaluation of the immediately completed work and consideration of the direction of the new work to be undertaken in the next phase. It has been difficult to adhere to this ideal in practice, particularly in the third phase when withdrawal from other activities has been almost impossible.

TABLE 1 - ALLOCATION OF TIME BY SOURCE OF FUNDING.

July 1, 1956 - June 30, 1967.

<u>Source of Funding</u>	<u>Months Supported</u>
<u>July 1, 1956 - March 31, 1962</u>	
Research project, RFF grant	26 months
Consultant and other Contract Assignments	
Resources for the Future	1 month
Employment Security Comm.....	3
U.S.National Park Service	3
Battelle Memorial Institute	2
Alaska State Planning Commission	3
Alaska Legislative Council	1
Division of State Planning	<u>6</u>
	19
Trustee, Alaska Plywood Corp.	15
Carnegie Visiting Professor, Univ.of Alaska ...	<u>9</u>
<u>Sub-Total</u>	<u>69 months</u>
<u>April 1, 1962-June 30, 1967</u>	
Research project, AINA-RFF-U.A. grant	35 months
Consultant and contract assignments:	
Alaska Mental Health Div.	1. 0 months
Bureau of Indian Affairs	4. 5
Bureau of Reclamation	18. 0
Federal Field Committee for Development Planning	2. 5
Regional Medical Planning, Washington-Alaska	1. 5
Alaska State Council on the Arts	<u>0. 5</u>
	28
<u>Sub-Total</u>	<u>63 months</u>
<u>Recapitulation, July 1, 1956 - June 30, 1967</u>	
Research project, AINA-RFF-U.A. grant	71 months
Contracts and other outside sources	<u>61</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>132 months</u>

Accomplishment of Primary Objectives

Evaluation of the accomplishment of the primary objectives at this date can only be tentative and incomplete as the program is only two thirds finished. The third and final phase of the projected major research work will be completed during the 1967-68 academic year. The first two completed phases resulted in the publication of the two books listed in the attached bibliography. Within Alaska they have had the sort of influence on further work in economics and other social sciences which would be expected from work which is the first of its kind in an area. They have been used repeatedly by other scholars and private consulting firms with Alaskan assignments as a point of departure for their newer or more specialized work, and have had a direct influence on the teaching of Alaska history, economic development and natural resource management within Alaska.

The fact that the first two phases resulted in the publication of books is evidence that other aspects of the primary objective were accomplished. Decision to publish is made only after review of the manuscripts by a panel of social scientists unrelated to the work and the institutions involved. Both books have enjoyed a good and continuing sale outside Alaska. The first book is in second printing and the second book may be soon. A survey would be necessary to determine the meaning of the sales figures in terms of influence upon or contributions to the general body of social science thought and methodology. Interpretation and evaluation would be difficult, in any case, and premature at this stage.

Aside from reviews and some correspondence from readers, there have been indications that the concepts developed in the books have been of some general influence. For example, they were used as reference sources in the work of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories (particularly in the regional design of the work) and in the recent organization of programs of the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology at St. Paul University. It has been reported to the author that his books are required or supplementary reading for courses in natural resources management at the University of Washington and the

University of Wisconsin and in regional studies program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The continuing sales figures would suggest that the books are also used elsewhere for such purposes. Many of the concepts and conclusions developed have become increasingly common-place in general social science writings, but this is undoubtedly due largely to the fact that the earlier formulation of this project was part of a developing mainstream which was emerging in any case.

Accomplishments of Secondary Objectives

Of the three sets of secondary objectives, the most important in terms of time and effort expended and results obtained were those relating to promotion of the University of Alaska's social science research function. The mounting of this research effort initially was faced with the dual problem of lack of available funds and professional personnel and the difficulties of "importing" more of each into Alaska. During 1959-60 Rogers engaged in correspondence and discussions with Prof. Hans Jensen, then professor of economics at the University, and Dr. Harold Barnett, chairman of the economics department at Wayne State University and a former RFF staff member, on arranging an exchange of students and faculty to undertake social science research in Alaska drawing upon the greater manpower and facilities at Wayne State and the unique research opportunities in Alaska. This had advanced to the stage of an exchange of memoranda of understanding, scheduling of initial projects and budgets, etc. when the University of Alaska participation was withdrawn by its new administration. There followed a prolonged approach involving repeated drafting of proposals to foundations and government research sources to secure funding of a program based exclusively at the University which culminated (with a substantial assist from AINA's Wingspread symposium) in a Ford Foundation grant early in 1967 in the amount of \$ 550,000 to be appropriated over a period of five years.

An Institute of Business, Economic and Government Research (now the Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research) was established in 1961 by transfer

of the RFF-AINA funds for Rogers with a one-third matching by the University to create a position of Research Professor of Economics. This new institute remained essentially a one-man show until increased appropriations by the State Legislature and contracts with the federal government made possible employing additional full-time professional staff commencing in 1965. Staff was increased each year and with the 1967 Ford grant the 1967-68 staff consists of a full-time director and two administrative assistants, 2 full-time research professors, 2 part-time outside consultants, 4 senior research assistants, 11 social science faculty members engaged part-time in research and teaching, 3 staff members for the "Review of Economic and Business Conditions," 11 research assistants (students), 6 secretarial staff members.

The promotion of a continuing State planning effort was not entirely successful, although contributions were made. The short-comings were due to a number of factors, including failure to recognize the extent of the general lack of understanding of the nature of planning and appreciation of its importance, an anti-research-political environment, confusion created by competitive activities of outside firms of consultants, etc. The contributions to fostering the State's planning effort included preparation of the first long-range capital improvement program for the State (with Victor Fischer) which has served as the model for all subsequent planning in public works, highways, etc. a period of 8 months as an informal and unpaid advisor to the first continuous planning body within the government, and the production (with Richard Cooley) of a two volume statistical and analytical handbook designed to provide basic data and guidelines for subsequent planning. On the federal side, Rogers served as consultant to the Bureau of Reclamation in the appraisal of the proposed Rampart power project (approximately 18 months), Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and most recently the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska.

The range of subject matter covered by consultant and contract research has been wide and varied. In economic development, for example, it has ranged from studies of the development of native arts and crafts to determination of the

economic feasibility of the two billion dollar Rampart power proposal. The extent and nature is indicated by the titles in the attached bibliography of published reports.

Educational activities have included serving as Carnegie Visiting Professor of Economics at the University of Alaska (1960-61) and lecturer since 1958 at the "Summer Workshop on Alaska" at the University, frequent guest lectures at the Juneau Community College, guest lecturer at the Alaska Methodist University (1965, 1966, 1967) lecturer in the Alaska Rural School Project (July 1966), lecturer and discussion leader in four orientation sessions for Alaska VISTA Trainees (during 1965 and 1966), consultant and discussion leader for the NDEA Counseling and Guidance Institute at the University of Alaska (June 1966), guest lecturer at the Department of Geography, University of Washington (1966) and giving numerous talks to service clubs and other public groups.

Immediately following the 1964 Alaska Earthquake the special committee established under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council requested that Roger's services be made available as a member of the Geography Panel. This involved participation in four panel meetings, review of considerable material on the quake, a period of one week at Stanford University to complete writing and the preparation of two of the major sections of the volume on The Human Ecology of the Alaska Earthquake. Travel expenses were reimbursed by the NAS-NRC, but time which totaled about two months was supported by the joint grant.

As a member of the Juneau community, Rogers' time and professional talents were made available during a period of important local economic and governmental change. During the 1957-58, 1958-59 fiscal years, he took a total of 15 months leave to serve as the court-appointed trustee in an attempt to reorganize a local plywood plant faced with bankruptcy. This was primarily a community service (compensation was at a fraction of that received under the project due to lack of funds), but valuable insights were gained into the problems of establishing and operating a business enterprise in Alaska. (The plant was destroyed by fire on the eve of a

compromise arrangement for operation as a green vancer plant). Volunteer community services have embraced a range of community programs including a term of office as a member of the city council, member of a local government charter commission, and several years as president of the board of Trustees of the Teenage Club in Juneau (primarily serving the Indian children of the area) during which a successful campaign was conducted for financing and constructing a \$ 210,000 club house and community center. All of these activities, worthwhile in themselves, have contributed greatly to his understanding of political and social processes.

A totally unplanned function which emerged after publication of the first book has been that of serving as a reference point for visiting scholars, government officials (including Canadian, Japanese, Danish, etc.), and journalists and an information center, a reviewer of unpublished or proposed work by others. In general this time, which was considerable, was not compensated for by those benefiting and was born by the grant funds and the personal purse of the Rogers' family where entertainment was involved. The single exception to this was the Battelle Memorial Institute which reimbursed grant fund for all time spent orienting their investigators and reviewing the final drafts of their Northwest North America transportation study. In the absence of many "old hands" with social science training, Rogers steered newcomers to sources of reliable data, indicating areas needing special attention and otherwise eliminating loss of time in initial exploration, and providing guidelines all of which probably have been of great value in pushing the frontiers of social science research in Alaska beyond the limits of his own capabilities. He has also been of value to researchers who are in Alaska for specific projects only and are not in a position to acquire on their own the needed Alaskan background.

Future Significance

From my personal standpoint, this experience has been most rewarding and satisfying. Although I find myself still far from the long-range goals set, there has been an almost immediate sense of being able to perceive reality as an integrated whole. There remains the task of convincing other students in the social sciences

that parts of the north can be used as regions in which to study and understand a multi-dimensional entity in its entirety without the need to break down knowledge into fragmented and compartmentalized units. There also remains the further task of relating what I believe have been the insights gained to the more complex systems which are the sources of the simplified and isolated extensions with which I have been dealing and to attempt to relate the theoretical aspects of my work to the main body of social science disciplines.

My experience also suggests an approach which might be further tested to meeting the requirements of the northern regions for the services of social scientists. One of the major concerns of the 1966 Middle North symposium sponsored by the Arctic Institute at Wingspread, Wisconsin centered on the need of these northern regions for what amounted to an elite corps of professionals who had developed the necessary specialized knowledge of the regions sufficient to be termed northern experts in the fullest sense of the term. Questions as to how to attract and hold competent professional people of this sort in the north or direct some of their energies to northern subjects were raised but not satisfactorily answered. The recruiting and training of such corps would be a costly business and there remained the question as to whether the resulting career would be sufficiently challenging and rewarding to attract the required talent. Assuming a group of young people could be persuaded to follow such a course, the preparation for such a career would include familiarity with at least one additional language of a northernⁿ country, competence in an established academic discipline which might have some relevance to the North, and a determination to eventually become a person who would not be overlooked when any questions arose relating to the northern regions, their development and understanding.

From the standpoint of creating a rewarding career and to justify the investment of time and money in the acquiring of such specialized background, the aim should be to become not simply a northern expert, but to be a social scientist who has

created a vantage point in a special environment from which to observe the larger and more complex contemporary environment. The northern-based social scientist should double as something a prophet and a seer in relation to contemporary society in the large sense of the word. The approach or preparation is through personal integration and involvement in some portion of the North which can be conveniently taken over as one's own special preserve. By withdrawal from the more general larger society, one should then strive to develop the abilities to perceive the patterns and identify the strategic factors which are making that society change and develop or retrogress. In other words, this withdrawal into the north should not be looked upon as a retreat or a removing of one's self from the main stream or the academic rat race, but be considered as a device or a method of freeing one's self from the hold of the past which is the means of expression in contemporary society of what is going on. It is necessary to free one's self from the past in order to live in the present and prepare one's self for living in the future. If one is involved in part of a frontier or marginal region, the process of personal recognition of change and the ability to accept change becomes an everyday fact of life. One must constantly question and even doubt the accepted wisdom and one must be prepared to utilize every talent of improvisation one has at one's command.

If we are able to create a group of alert, intelligent young people who are involved in northern affairs but also who are able to look upon the development and the changes that are occurring "outside", we may have made a contribution far beyond the limitation of our own physical region. We shall have created a fund or a force for innovation in society which has been the strength of our development in previous generations but which appears now in short supply.

In sum, the north-based social scientist must not be a pedant or a narrowly specialized technician who has no interest or understanding beyond a fragment of a very unique and specialized environment. He must aim to develop a technical competence to deal with his specialized northern involvement while at the same time creating

a philosophical base upon which to deal with the crying need of the present age for understanding and guidance in the uncharted sea of social, economic and political change. As a northern-oriented organization, the Arctic Institute could play a double role in both meeting the requirements of the north for the services of social scientists and possibly encouraging highly imaginative and original research which would benefit these disciplines in their broadest sense, by expanding the program it started with my Alaska-based career to others and other regions.