

NOVEMBER 13, 1952

Explorer Too Busy For Birthdays



Mrs. Donald B. MacMillan shown with her famous explorer husband aboard their schooner, Bowdoin, forced him to pause a bit for a dinner party Saturday night to mark his 78th birthday which was really on Monday, on which day he took off for Canada for the first of his series of lectures this year.

On Monday our most widely known native citizen, Commander Donald B. MacMillan was 78 years old, though he looks and walks like a man a couple of decades younger, and his birthday party with dinner had to be held on Saturday because Captain Mac is far too busy to let another birthday interfere with his crowded program. He took off Monday morning on the first bus for his lecture tour which will include talks in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton. At the end of his Canadian tour he will come back to Provincetown for a few days and then fly west for talks at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, and at Oklahoma City. Then back to Provincetown to be at home for the holidays but early in the year his heavy speaking program will get underway. This includes a lecture to the Explorers Club in New York City. After a Winter's workout he wants to take one more trip into the Far North more or less as a "clean-up" of unfinished details, make sure that the future of his school on the Labrador coast is assured and see again his Eskimo friends among whom there are two or three who were with him when he accompanied Admiral Peary to the Pole 44 years ago. Of course he could pause for a few weeks and dash off a book on a theme that the fun of living starts at 70.

post at Thule. In the Winter of 1923-24, when the Bodoin was frozen in at Refuge Harbor, some distance north of Etah, he also made several sled trips to Thule. Actually, Thule, as it appears on the map, could hardly be called a settlement, at least until recent activities, he said. During and just prior to World War II, it contained only two buildings and a few sealskin tents in Summer and holes in the ground in Winter, the commander said. The two buildings comprised the trading post, complete in one building which formed a hub for traders for more than 100 miles around, and living quarters of the trader. When Rasmussen wasn't there, the station was in charge of Peter Freuchen, whom the commander visited many times. The Eskimos liked the area because of good sealing and walrus hunting in the neighborhood, Commander MacMillan said. Activities in the building of the air base began after the war and there were evidences of it on the Commander's last few trips, but in line with the secrecy of the operation nothing was said of it.

Was 1st Mate

The commander said that the present officer in charge of the weather station at Thule, a Major in the Army, is Jack Crowell of Gloucester, who served as 1st mate for Commander MacMillan on the Bowdoin at least six times. Because of his knowledge of the Far North, gained with the commander, Major Crowell served in the North during the War, and then was recalled when the present construction program started. He and his wife were flown to Thule, where they now live. An interesting sidelight to the Thule area is the fact that the first white man known to have visited it was a British explorer, John Ross, whose ship in 1818 dared the Polar seas. At that time it was learned that the Eskimos inhabiting the area thought "they were the only persons in the world," the commander said, "and had never seen anyone else. The commander also said from his memory the temperature never got as severely low as in other places, usually no more than 40 to 50 degrees below zero, because of the proximity to open water, which makes nearby land warmer. However, the commander said, in many places inland, where he was and where there was no open water, the temperature went as low as 70-odd degrees below zero.

Commander MacMillan's Eskimo Friends Will Test Boot



OFF TO ARCTIC—Commander Donald B. MacMillan (center) receives from Earl Reed of Hood Rubber Company a pair of Subzero Pac boots which the veteran polar explorer will have his Eskimo friends test during the long Arctic winter. With Mrs. MacMillan (left) and a crew of 13, the 80-year-old "Cap'n Mac" will sail Saturday from Boothbay Harbor, Me., on his 30th trip to the Far North. During the four-month voyage, he expects to take his ship, the "Bowdoin", farther north than any vessel has ever been.

When Commander Donald B. MacMillan's "Bowdoin" sails from Boothbay Harbor, Me., Saturday on the veteran explorer's 30th trip to the Arctic, the ship's stores will contain a new type of footgear for "Cap'n Mac's" Eskimo friends. This is the Hood "Subzero Pac", civilian version of the insulated boot developed by B. F. Goodrich Company in conjunction with the Armed Forces to reduce the heavy