

## Sealer Theron's Crew Did Well In The Gulf This Year

By GERRY McNEIL  
Canadian Press Staff Writer

NEW HARBOR, N.S. (CP)—A sleek, white vessel pulled into this tiny harbor on Mahone Bay recently after two hazardous months in the icefields of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

It was the 849-ton Theron, with 48 men and 24,600 seal pelts aboard. A day later most of the men were headed in all directions—some to nearby Halifax, others to homes in central Canada and in the Atlantic provinces.

Most had had a hectic time of skinning seals in their icy homes. The Theron had been icebound for a long as two weeks and at one time had run precariously short of fresh water.

### SEALING'S DECLINE

More than 200 men on 14 ships sealed in the gulf this year. During the 1850s, as many as 15,000 men, mostly from Newfoundland, on about 400 ships headed for the sealing grounds.

Over the years, the annual seal hunt has produced its tragedies. When the Southern Cross sank in 1914 there were 173 men lost and 78 when the Newfoundland went down. Some ships have been lost without loss of life in recent years and this year the beater was crushed and sent to the bottom in March. All crew members were saved.

"I think it's more luck than enough that some boys weren't lost," said 20-year-old Bill Bilyk of Toronto, after his first sealing trip this year.

"Yes," agreed James LeGay, West Dublin, N.S. "This is my last trip out."

Karl Karlson, of Karlson and Co. Ltd., a Halifax shipping agency, arranges the expeditions. March when Arctic currents carry seal-bearing ice floes from the coast of Greenland down through the Strait of Belle Isle, between Newfoundland and Labrador.

### STRONG MEN NEEDED

Sealers have to be young, strong men, able to run over the jagged floes after their prey and haul them back to the ship. They must be able to stand the raw damp of the Arctic sea and the glare of a winter sun.

Usually they are inexperienced and are trained in their job on the way to the gulf. The Theron's crew did well, returning with enough pelts to give each man \$750 for the hunt. Another Karlson vessel, the Orel, came in with only 800, hardly enough to pay for the trip. The men as well as the owners lose when seal herds aren't found. They are paid only in shares.

North Atlantic seals, called harps and hoods, are divided by the sealer into grades. High grade are the very young, with soft white fur. They are known as whites. Older seals with shining black hides are called beaters.

The North Atlantic variety is the hair seal, distinct from the fur seal of the Bering Sea.

White pelts go to furriers for about \$5 each; black pelts are bought by tanneries and fetch \$2.50 to \$3.

### LITTLE EQUIPMENT

Sealers go out on the ice wear-

ing sunglasses and armed with baseball bats and skinning knives. Sometimes they walk mile to find seals. A good man can kill and skin an animal in about a minute. Hides of young seals weigh up to 40 pounds; those of their parents run to 100 pounds.

"Sealing looks cruel, but I don't think it is," said young "The young ones cry pathetically when they see a man, but they die as soon as they are hit."

Skins taken in a day's work are heaped in piles and marked. Each ship's kill is jealously guarded. Frequently the Theron was in sight of other ships.

When the Theron was icebound off Cape Breton it was necessary to wait for a change of wind to shift the ice.

A rainstorm proved a godsend when the ship was short of water. Great pools formed on the icepans and crewmen pumped the Theron's tanks full.

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**Will Scour Cambrian Heights For Fossils**  
CALGARY (CP) — T. Potter Chamney, a paleontologist with an oil company here, plans to scour the Cambrian Heights area of the city for prehistoric animal remains.  
His decision followed the discovery of part of a fossilized tusk from a mammoth in an excavation in the northwest section of the city.  
The Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists identified and classified the find. A native of Saskatoon, Mr. Chamney, said the mammoth that once owned the tusk was a mere youngster as far as prehistoric discoveries go. He placed its age at about 20,000 years.  
He described it as probably as large as the existing Indian elephant and resembling the elephant except that it had long hair over its body.  
The discovery is believed to be the first prehistoric find of its kind in the immediate Calgary area.  
While a search is being made for other remains, the ASPG plans to reconstruct the rest of the tusk using plaster and the measurements of the existing piece. It is in excellent condition and shows the hole in which the root fitted.  
Mr. Chamney also plans an expedition to High River, Alta., 40 miles south of here, where caves contain pictographs, or early drawings. Recently a dinosaur's thigh bone, in three pieces, was found near the town.

## Third Generation Railwayman Retires

MONTREAL (CP) — When George Bentlie's grandfather went searching for a career in Canada, he chose the railway business. Later his son spent 45 years at it.

George and his five brothers kept on the tradition, and to date have tallied up a one-generation record of 300 years' service with the CNR.

This month George retired, after 50 years spent riding more than 2,000,000 miles of track as call boy, brakeman, trainmaster, instructor, conductor, and baggage-man.

From now on he says he'll limit his travelling to a patch of backyard garden.

"I was born beside the tracks, and I guess have railway blood in my veins," he says.

When the ship was short of water. Great pools formed on the icepans and crewmen pumped the Theron's tanks full.

"While we were stuck we'd play poker for smokes or just listen to the radio," said Bilyk. "I built an igloo just for the fun of it."

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