

ON FURLOUGH FROM THE ARCTIC

Herbert Hall, Northman of Herculean Stamp, Returns to Civilization After Five Years—Has Broken Hard Trails for H.B.C. in Many Districts of the Northwest

A SPLENDID type of the Hudson's Bay fur trader of today is Herbert H. Hall, district manager for the western Arctic, who is the son of a former H.B.C. fur trade Commissioner and whose three brothers have also served the old Company in the far north.

Physically, Mr. Hall is such a man as one might expect the north to produce—six feet one, two hundred sixty-five pounds of brawn. Beside average men he bulks like a Goliath, yet without corpulence. His is the piercing eye of a rifleman; the iris is cold-keen blue and the whites are clean as milk, evidence of a superb health and steady nerve.

At forty-three, he still travels long distances on foot, driving his own dogs. Few natives could out-"mush" him today. But ten years ago H.B.C. men who knew him around the Bay say that no Eskimo or Indian could keep pace with him on the trail.

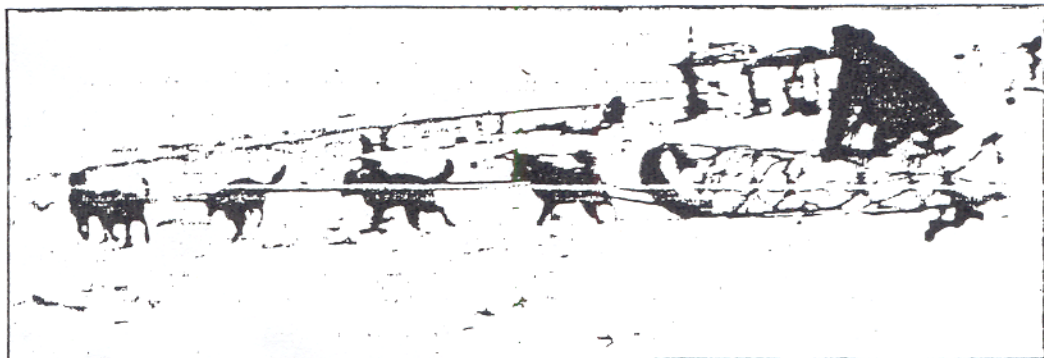
In those days he was exploring the wilderness for new H.B.C. post sites; carrying the packet and freighting supplies by dog team between Chesterfield Inlet and Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay.

This was the most arduous route in all the Company's great territory. It is a savage land, whipped by winter gales, with practically no growth of any kind to shelter the lone traveller. Mr. Hall experienced a temperature of 70 degrees below zero on one of these trips. The barren Arctic waste yielded no sustenance and no comforts. A little food, the indispensable copper kettle and tea, an eiderdown robe and a Hudson's Bay point blanket, this was our fur trader's equipment.

It is said of Mr. Hall that when bannock and tea gave out he would share with his huskies their rations of raw, frozen fish, and, when every scrap of food was gone, still "mush" for



HERBERT H. HALL



Mr. Hall leaving Herschel Island, Nov., 1922, on 800 mile trip across Alaska to railhead, en route to Winnipeg

miles with greater endurance than an Eskimo.

Born near Victoria, B.C., on December 18th, 1880, Mr. Hall first joined the Service in 1896, aged 16, as apprentice clerk. At the expiration of his three-year contract, he resigned to become secretary of the St. Anthony Mining Company of Omineca, B.C., and later was engaged with the handling of supplies while the government was building the telegraph line to the Yukon and making improvements on the Skeena river. He was for more than two years in the government salmon hatchery on the Skeena.

Mr. Hall re-entered the Service in 1905, taking the post of purser on the H.B.C. steamer *Saskatchewan*, which covered an itinerary of 1100 miles from Cedar Lake in Manitoba to Edmonton. In 1906, the last freight was carried into Edmonton by the river route, as the Canadian Northern Railway reached the Alberta capital in that year.

As clerk and post manager for six years in the Saskatchewan fur trade district, Mr. Hall established Eskimo Post, 600 miles north of Prince Albert, and served at Reindeer Lake and Lac du Brochet.

In 1913, he was transferred to Chesterfield on the northwest coast of Hudson Bay and spent four years exploring for new H.B.C. post sites and in connection with the development of the trade at Chesterfield. He established Baker Lake Post at the head of Chesterfield inlet, 200 miles from the coast.

After a six months' furlough in 1917, Mr. Hall was transferred as post inspector for the western Arctic, with headquarters at Herschel Island, 100 miles from the mouth of the Mackenzie in the Arctic ocean. In 1918 he became district manager, succeeding Chris Harding, who had opened the district four years previously and was now transferred to York Factory. Since going to the western Arctic, Mr. Hall has established Tree River, Shingle Point, Demarcation Point and Kent Peninsula posts for H.B.C., all of these being on the Arctic coast from Coronation gulf to the Alaskan boundary.

Mr. Hall fluently speaks Eskimo, Cree and Chipewyan, and has the distinction of being the only H.B.C. district manager to escape matrimony.