

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,

Journal of Glaciology

SIR, *About the use of the expression "Indlandsis": comments on Dr. Weidick's letter*

"But now, Socrates, what do you think all this amounts to? It is mere scrapings and shavings of discourse as I said a while ago, divided into bits"

Plato, *Hippias major*, 304A,
quoted in Kierkegaard (1846), back of title-page

In his letter, Weidick (1967) gives a good account of the origin of the term *Indlandsisen* as applied to the ice which covers the whole of Greenland. He demands that this term, and also its translations (Inland Ice, Inlandeis, Indlandsis) should be exclusively applied in the future to the ice cover of Greenland. I think that this demand is somewhat exaggerated.

First let us note that the Danish term *Indlandsisen* is applied to the ice of Greenland thanks to Dr. Rink, who first had the general idea of the origin and development of this immense glacier which covers Greenland. But *Indlandsisen* means ice of the interior, ice in the middle of the land, *continental ice* (*glace continentale*) according to the usage employed by F. Johnstrup (1890).

This phenomenon exists not only in Greenland but also in the Antarctic. It also existed during past geological eras in Feno-Scandia, North America, the Sahara, South Africa, etc. during the ice ages. It is thus legitimate to use this term for the same phenomenon in other parts of the world than Greenland, and I consider that we are honouring the Danish geographer Rink in using his term *Indlandsisen*.

Further this term can easily be translated into English (Inland Ice) and German (*Inlandeis*). We may note that Ice Sheet has a more general meaning than Inland Ice, and is not a synonym. If the Danish term and its translations can only be used for the ice cover of Greenland, what are we to call the other continental ice covers? Furthermore, Weidick should give a translation, exclusively for Greenland, of *Indlandsisen* in all other languages such as Russian, Chinese, etc.

In French there is no literal translation and as the term *glace continentale* is not very happy, for more than half a century *Indlandsis* has been used. *Petit Larousse* gives the following definition:

INLANDSIS n.m. (mot norvég., de *in*, dans, *land*, pays, et *is*, glace). Glacier continental des régions polaires recouvrant le relief et se terminant à sa périphérie par des glaciers de vallée qui atteignent la mer, ou par une barrière de glace. SYN.: calotte glaciaire.

We may criticize *barrière* and *calotte*, but we must reject the *nom masculin, norvégien* which comes we know not whence, despite its consecration by usage. This is why for some years, at the request of our Danish colleagues, and to honour Rink, we have been using the term *Indlandsis* for an ice cover existing or having existed in polar regions. But we do not favour limiting its use to Greenland. Otherwise where do we go? It would be better to impose on international usage the Eskimo term *Sermerssua* which was given to the Indlandsis well before the Danes came to Greenland (*sermerssua* = "large glacier").

And what about smørrebød, køkkenmødding, kayak, anorak, etc. . . . exclusively Danish?

Centre d'Études Glaciologiques des Régions Arctiques et Antarctiques,

A. BAUER

Face au 22, Quai Carnot,

92 Saint-Cloud, France

11 February 1967

REFERENCES

- Johnstrup, F. 1890. Résumé des communications sur le Grønland. *Meddelelser om Grønland*, Bd. 1, Nr. 7, p. 187-211.
Kierkegaard, S. A. 1846. *Afsluttende videnskabelig efterskrift til de filosofiske smuler. Mimisk-pathetisk-dialektisk sammenskrift; eksistentielt indlæg af Johannes Climacus*. København, Reitzel.
Weidick, A. 1967. About the use of the expression "inland ice". *Journal of Glaciology*, Vol. 6, No. 47, p. 763.

SIR, *About the use of the expression "Indlandsis": comments on Dr. Weidick's letter*

No one is unaware that the term *Indlandsis* (with a capital I) was originally the name given to the ice sheet in the interior of Greenland. But the proper name has been used in France by geographers as a