

TOURIST?

By F. A. Lackner

On March 10, 1963, Dr. David Livingstone started whirling in his grave in Westminster Abbey. One can only hope that his speed of rotation will soon become merely sub-sonic and that he will some day again be allowed to rest in peace.

As reported by the Associated Press from Zomba, Nyasaland, on that day, Government Minister Harry Chipembere told the Nyasaland Parliament - "I do not recognize him (Livingstone) as an explorer. He was no more an explorer than I was when I went to Britain. The state of Malawi (the native name for Nyasaland) was known long before these European African tourists came." And if Livingstone is thus reduced to the status of a tourist, what about Henry Stanley? Is one to categorize him with the rangers at Yellowstone Park who return lost children to the manager's office at the motel?

Yet there is some justice in the remark of the African minister. It is a viewpoint to which Steffansson could agree without much difficulty. How is one to define exploration? Obviously these two men take the position that if the feet of man have ever trod a particular piece of land before, subsequent visitors may be traversing land which is unknown to them, but they are merely visitors, or tourists, not explorers, or at least not discoverers. Steffansson is of the opinion that man originated more or less independently on all continents, or that very early men traveled from one continent to another, so no subsequent traveler to those continents can claim to have discovered them. There were Indians on this continent when Columbus got here,

there were aborigines in Australia when Captain Cook "discovered" that continent, there were black men by the thousand in Africa long before Vasco de Gama and the other Portuguese extended knowledge of that land.

Obviously, if a man who travels to, finds out about, and returns from a land foreign to his own, a land about which nothing is known to the civilization of which that man is a part, he is to all intents and purposes a discover. Subsequent voyagers to that land who extend the knowledge about it can be considered explorers. At least they are so considered by their fellow-men, messers Chipembere and Steffansson to the contrary notwithstanding.

Exploration - the discovery of new lands, the climbing of mountain peaks never before scaled by man, the achievement of getting farther north than man ever has before, the mapping of hitherto unknown territory, the location of the sources of important rivers - has always had a fascination for men. Not for all men, of course, but in every generation there have been men who could not resist the temptation to find out what lies beyond the next turn in the road or on the other side of the next cape. To attempt an explanation of this fascination is utterly futile, for the reasons given by an explorer to a stay-at-home are meaningless and silly. But to the explorer it is the question and not the answer that is silly. One wonders, however, whether Scott may not have had some doubts about this whole matter of polar exploration when he got to the South Pole only a few short days after Amundsen, found the evidence of a previous camper and turned back to die, with the three men of his party, when only eleven miles from safety. At least it would seem

so from the remarks in his diary - "The Pole.....Great God! this is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have labored to it without the reward of priority."

The history of exploration is not a story always of vast expeditions, huge governmental subsidies and the marshalling of all the resources of a nation. If the explorations of today are a matter of national purpose, the explorations of years past were in many cases carried on for purposes of personal gain, or the gratification of personal aims. The first explorers naturally had the first and best opportunities for personal gain - to exploit as well as explore. In fact, in many cases the line between exploration and piracy was hard to define and not always strictly observed.

Nor were the places explored always far away and hard to reach. Many involved only the search for a better farm. Or the exhaustion of grass lands necessitated moving the flocks of animals. But even when exploration was avowedly the object, the preparations were often rather casual. Alan Moorhead, in "The Blue Nile" remarks upon this by saying - "Nothing is more intriguing in African exploration in the nineteenth century than the casualness with which it was often undertaken. A group of friends would meet and discuss a trip abroad. Shall it be Vienna, Naples or the Canary Islands? Or possibly Africa? Yes, of course, Africa. They know nothing about Africa, no shipping lines exist, no one can tell them anything very definite about the climate, the kinds of medicines required on the journey, the local languages, the food, the money or the inhabitants; and maps are unobtainable.... The gunsmith in the Strand supplies them with firearms,

the banker gives them a draft on Cairo, the latter furnishes sun-helmets with flaps at the back, and off they go as lightheartedly as if they were setting off for the south of France to avoid the English winter."

Exploration for the sake of exploration itself - to fill in the white spaces on the map - as distinguished from the largely scientific aims of modern Antarctic expeditions and distinguished from colonization where the exploring is purely incidental, seemed to reach a cyclical peak in the middle and latter half of the nineteenth century. It was in this period that the centuries-old search for the Northwest Passage turned into a frenzied race to reach the North Pole and to explore and map the whole Arctic area. It was also in this period that the great drive to "open up" Africa occurred.

The objectives in these two areas of exploration were entirely different. Once the Arctic affair became a race to the Pole, the idea of exploration became strictly secondary. The whole idea was to be first to the Pole - just to get there and back. The winner, of course, was Peary, and on his final and successful trip he was in such a hurry and made such a fast dash that he had time for no exploring - nothing but running. The climate of course is not conducive to just staying and camping and observing the landscape. It was far different in Africa, where the explorers such as Livingstone, Stanley, du Chaillu, Speke, Burton, and many others remained literally for years and spent months just making final preparations and accustoming themselves to the climate and trying to learn a few of the native dialects. Where the Arctic demanded hardy men, strong and with tremendous endurance, comparatively frail men like Speke, or even sickly men like Livingstone could stay in Africa for years.

These two cases - Africa and the Arctic - could also serve to illustrate the difference in the kinds of preparations that were made. A voyager to the Arctic of course had to take practically everything with him - and hope he had enough to last him for the time he intended to stay plus at least a year more should he get caught in the ice. About the only thing not customarily brought from home was dogs - these were normally acquired in Greenland on the way north. In Africa, on the other hand, very little except clothing was brought from home and everything was bought locally.

When Lieutenant A. W. Greeley took the Lady Franklin Bay expedition to the Arctic in 1881 he went as the leader of an official United States Government expedition. Those of us today who are accustomed to the lavish preparations of modern governmental expeditions might read with interest his comment on the preparations he made. He said - "The detailed requisitions for food, clothing and other supplies were prepared in seventy-two hours, and under stress of knowledge that the question of sending the expedition depended very largely upon the character and quantity of supplies asked for." Certainly a polite way of describing the penuriousness of the government. Also, perhaps a rather short time to decide what would be required to maintain the existence of twenty-three men for a period of at least one year - which turned out to be three years.

Supplies for this expedition included not only food and clothing, but also over a hundred tons of coal, dogs, much scientific equipment and a wooden house sixty feet by seventeen feet, plus small boats and sledges.

Though the preparations made by Greeley were somewhat hurried, they were adequate for the length of stay that was contemplated. Only because they were not relieved in time and had to stay two extra years were they hard-pressed at the end. The survivors, seven men out of the original twenty-three, were eating the last bit of their sleeping bags and shoes when they were rescued.

Compared to Greeley and the other men who went to the Arctic, the African explorers had a field-day. The climate itself, though unhealthy, did not constitute the hazard of the Arctic, and clothing was a matter of modesty rather than necessity. Food also was not usually a problem, except as they wanted to supplement an adequate diet with the delicacies of home, or except as an occasional absence of game might cause a temporary shortage. Many of them did, in fact, exist entirely on the bounties of the land. Livingstone, for instance, was never one to be burdened by large quantities of supplies. The big problem in Africa would appear to have been one of medical supplies. The universal good health enjoyed by Arctic explorers, except when they suffered from starvation or frost-bite, was quite rare in Africa. Fevers of all sorts were rife, the tse-tse fly was ever to be feared, malaria was a common state of affairs. So a well-stocked medicine chest was perhaps the most important item of preparation. The exhaustion of his medical supplies and the fact that many years of exposure to the debilitating climate and myriad fevers had finally weakened him was responsible for Livingstone's final illness and death - not the more immediate hazards of frost-bite or starvation. Speke and Burton, for instance, in their trip of 1857, found that litters to carry them during their frequent periods of illness, were among their most valuable assets.

In his volume "How I Found Livingstone", Stanley devotes many pages to his preparations for this trip. But the preparations included primarily barter material. Since money of course was of no value in central Africa he had to equip himself with some means of purchasing the food and other supplies he would need along the road. So he describes at great length the exact value of goods taken for each member of his party. This apparently worked out to about forty yards of cloth per day for his party or roughly one hundred men. So he purchased eight thousand yards of American cotton sheeting, four thousand yards of a material called Kaniki and twenty-five hundred yards of miscellaneous colored cloth. All of this was for one year, so his projected two year trip would require double these quantities, or roughly thirty thousand yards of cloth - and all to be carried across Africa on the heads of men. But some of the tribes with whom he would be dealing preferred beads to cloth, and the choice of beads was a matter of no small importance, for some tribes preferred white beads, or black or brown or yellow, green or white. So he carried eleven different varieties of beads - twenty-two sacks of them. Things are never simple in the world of the explorer, however, so the currency question for Stanley was not quite that easily resolved. He also carried three-hundred and fifty pounds of brass wire. Brass wire was a standard item of currency, carried by all African explorers. The mind boggles at the quantities of it, and one wonders if the famed "jungle telegraph" was perhaps a telephone system. But all of this only solved his money problems. He also had some provisions (entirely for the white men of the party) cooking utensils, boats, rope, twine, tents, donkeys, saddles, bagging, canvas, tar, needles, tools, ammunition, guns, hatchets, medicines, bedding and presents for chiefs.

The Sheikh Hassid of Zanzibar and the English consul, a Captain Webb, must by this time have felt like the local branch of Abercrombie and Fitch. Apparently Stanley arrived at Zanzibar for this great expedition with only the clothes on his back and the financial resources of James Gordon Bennett behind him.

Parkinsons Law had its original beginnings in the field of exploration. The more things there are to be taken the bigger the ship must be to carry them and the more men necessary, which takes more supplies and more men to carry them, ad infinitum. This is precisely why Peary took only five men on his dash to the pole, why Scott had only a party of four to the South Pole, why the total expedition of Amundsen to the South Pole numbered only seven, why Hilary had only one man with him to the top of Everest. If it is true, as these expeditions would appear to prove, that he travels fastest who travels alone, we can only judge that speed was not expected in Africa.

One cannot easily categorize Dr. Livingstone. Certainly he was much more than a tourist. He was not primarily an explorer, although he explored a very substantial part of Africa. Although he was a medical doctor, at least of a sort, that was not his only objective. He was also a missionary of the Church, of course, and this was his major interest. But whatever he was, he was certainly a remarkably casual traveler - casual, at least, for an Englishman in Africa in the nineteenth century. No where in his books does he give anything but passing mention to supplies or preparations, and what few references one finds are primarily relating to arrangements for the welfare of his wife and children while he is out "in the bush". Livingstone had the ability, far beyond any of his contemporaries, to live with the natives, almost as a native, needing nothing that they did not have. This

ability, of course, enabled him to travel throughout the length and breadth of central and southern Africa practically at will and without the help of the local outfitters. On his first trip to Africa, lasting from 1840 to 1856, he took only what could be carried in one ox-cart, which was soon abandoned. And when Stanley uttered his famous words - "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?", he was living in a native hut entirely without benefit of any company except natives, with no European supplies of any sort. It was his lack of the medicines which the white man needs to survive in equatorial Africa that made him such a weak and pitiable specimen when he was found.

Moving from the debilitating heat and unhealthy (for the white man) climate of central Africa to the invigorating but often unfriendly climate of the Arctic one is impressed by the number of men who made Arctic exploration a lifetime career. Livingstone, and to a lesser extent Stanley, are really the only men who can be said to have had a lifelong interest in the exploration of Africa. Others may have spent long years there, or have made more than one trip, but most went but for a comparatively short time or for a single specific and usually limited objective. Of course the search for the headwaters of the Nile interested men from the days of the early Greeks until its final discovery by Speke in 1863. Most men, however, made one trip, returned to England and proceeded to devote themselves to books and lectures about that trip and to defend their particular theories. In the Arctic, though, men habitually made repeated trips. To a very large extent this was due to the fact that the hazards of Arctic travel precluded long or extended trips and the objective had to be gained by shorter and more frequent voyages.

Consider, for instance, two Norwegians. Reading of Roald Amundsen one is impressed that he spent many years exploring around in the Arctic, first sailed through the Northwest Passage and subsequently the Northeast Passage north of Russia and Siberia, and finding that he had been beaten to the North Pole by Peary, turned south and was the first man to the South Pole. Fridtjof Nansen was of similar tastes. Although he never reached either Pole, he made many fascinating trips of Arctic exploration, including the first crossing of Greenland. Nansen was not primarily just an Arctic traveller and explorer but rather a zoologist and oceanographer, and later became a diplomat and government official. But from his writings it is easy to see that whatever else he might be doing Arctic exploration was always a matter of the keenest interest to him. It is interesting also to note that the ship which he built especially for his intended trip through the ice to the North Pole was later used by Amundsen to carry his party to Antarctica.

One of the more fascinating Arctic voyages was made by Nansen to prove his theory that the flow of ice across the Arctic sea is from the north of Siberia, across the Pole and down to the east coast of Greenland. Nansen maintained that the failure of previous efforts to gain the Pole was due to this drift of ice toward the pole from the east and away from the pole in the west. So all attempts to go north from the northern coast of North America faced the added difficulties of trying to move north against ice flowing south. Had the polar explorers started from the Bering Straits or the coast of Siberia near the New Siberia Islands they would have had a far greater chance of success. Nansen intended to prove this theory. To prove it he proposed to build a ship that would withstand being purposely frozen into the ice and

then to sail north from the New Siberia Islands, allow himself to be frozen in, and then just sit and wait to be carried across the Pole and down again into the North Atlantic between Spitzbergen and Greenland.

Naturally, a trip like this could not be carried off on an exact schedule. Thus he must carry with him supplies and equipment for an indefinite but long stay. First he built his ship, the FRAM, and built it for this purpose only. Its sailing qualities in the ocean were secondary to its ability to withstand the pressure of the ice.

The construction of this ship is an example of the detailed preparations required for a successful exploration. Only 128 feet long, she was 36 feet broad, and drew 15 feet fully loaded with freeboard of only 3-1/2 feet. She had over four feet of solid oak in the bow, her sides were slightly over two feet thick, and she was a miserably wet ship to sail, but experienced no difficulty whatsoever when frozen into the ice.

This small ship carried thirteen men on a trip planned to last a minimum of two years. Food was plentiful and, in fact, by the standards of Arctic living, was even delicious and appetizing. Nothing was spared to make life pleasant. This was a scientific expedition as well as an attempt to reach the pole and hundreds of instruments of all kinds were carried. There was even a hand-powered electric generator to furnish exercise for the crew during the long winter night. Judging by the things Nansen and his men made for themselves while frozen in the ice he also carried a well-stocked lumber yard, a machine-shop and a stock of metals. Literally all the comforts of home were with them.

So it is all the more amazing that Nansen left this cozy haven. Everything was proceeding as planned. He was being carried more or less steadily north and west, his theory was being proven. But it seemed that while his theory was right he would miss the Pole by a scant hundred miles or so. Never being one to put mere creature comforts too high on his scale of values, Nansen decided to take one companion, two sledges and dogs to drag them and make a dash for the pole. His plan was to make a run for the pole, come back and meet the FRAM and sail the rest of the way home again in comfort. From the casual way in which he appeared to make preparations for the proposed rendezvous one suspects that he never really expected this meeting to come off. At any rate leave he did with one companion and as much in the way of supplies as his two sledges would carry. Again, his supplies were intended for a planned trip of about sixty days, but with the possibility that it might be quite a bit longer.

A year and a half in a ship frozen into the ice was now followed by a year and a half walking across the Arctic Sea. While Nansen and his companion walked across the ice, built kayaks and sailed across open water, his FRAM continued her planned voyage. Winter found Nansen on one of the smaller northern islands of the Franz Josef group, so here he built a cabin and wintered comfortably - comfortably, that is, if a hut not high enough to stand up in, and sharing a somewhat bloody walrus skin with a smelly companion constitutes comfort.

Early the next summer, almost three years after leaving Norway he and his companion met an English hunting party and were safely returned to Norway.

Strangely enough, the FRAM, after completing her voyage exactly as planned, arrived in Norway just one day later. And perhaps strangest of all, Nansen still had with him an emergency ration he had taken with him when he left the FRAM. His experiences would argue that in circumstances such as his the best preparation consists of a tremendous amount of resourcefulness. Even in the frozen Arctic he lived for a year with only what he could carry on his back or provide for himself from the country through which he passed. This meant mainly an ability to shoot bears and walruses, and to utilize every bit of those animals for clothing, food or shelter.

Now, in the middle of the twentieth century exploration is not nearly so casual as Moorhead described it to be in Africa. Nor is it conducted by individuals. Today, all the easy places having been reached and explored, sights are higher, and costs are as astronomical as the objectives. So governments have taken over.

Only a few times in history has any state had a national policy of exploration. Some nations have, of course, shared more in the exploration of the world than others, but this has usually been because of individuals within that nation, and not because the state itself sponsored or encouraged it as a matter of national objective. The ancient Phoenicians apparently had such a policy, but even there it would seem to have been more the result of a natural desire on the part of the people to seek trade wherever possible. Certainly the tremendous expansion of the known world by the Roman Empire was accomplished not because they wished to explore but because they wished to rule everything they could see. And the more they saw the more there was to rule, so it was conquest that drove them. The

Norsemen and Vikings undoubtedly had some natural desire to explore - certainly their descendants have been among the foremost explorers of modern days - but again it was as individuals seeking to wrest a living from the sea or from some more hospitable land than their own. Probably the closest to a policy of government-inspired exploration were the Portuguese under Prince Henry. But this was less a rationally derived policy than the driving force of one individual, for before his time the Portuguese were not great explorers, and after him the great era of Portuguese discovery petered out.

But one cannot dismiss Prince Henry so lightly. He can very certainly be given great credit for being the guiding spirit of modern space exploration. It was he who was the great believer in orderly preparation - preparations with him went so far as to discover the principles of nautical navigation in order that his ship captains might know where they were and where they were going. He even founded a school for navigation and the other facets of sea-going exploration, for designing proper ships, for studying the best kinds of food and supplies to take along. He did not believe in just putting some men and supplies in a ship and taking off. With him, each voyage improved a little bit upon the accomplishments of its predecessor. Each was a step toward greater knowledge, and each made the following step more certain. It was no accident that his ships and men gradually extended the boundaries of the known world and eventually went around it. It would not be surprising to find, also, that in relation to the wealth of his nation at the time he spent as much money as modern space exploration is costing this country.

From Prince Henry until the present day one finds very few organized national efforts at exploration. Lewis and Clark might be one exception - and even they would not have gone but for the dogged determination of one man, Jefferson, against practically unanimous opposition. They were sent primarily to find out what it was we had bought, not to find whether there was something out there.

One outstanding exception to the general disinterest of governments toward exploration is the long series of expeditions carried out by the British Navy in the nineteenth century to locate the Northwest Passage. The name of Sir John Franklin looms very large in any history of Arctic exploration, though he was notoriously unsuccessful. From 1818 when he made his first voyage to the Arctic until 1847 when he died with all the members of the crews of the two ships he commanded, he made repeated and extended trips of exploration to the north coast of North America. Between trips to the Arctic he was, curiously, governor-general of Tasmania - about as far from the Arctic as one could get. Successful or not, his last voyage touched off one of the greatest series of rescue expeditions in history. No less than thirty-nine relief expeditions, mostly sent by the British Navy, were sent after him, during the course of one of which a British Navy ship came within twelve miles of actually getting through the Northwest Passage. After this great effort, the interest of the British government in Arctic exploration seemed to flag. But in this country at least the pace began to quicken. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, in an international effort to advance the cause of science in a sort of International Geophysical Year, Lieutenant Greeley was sent by the U.S. Army into the Arctic. This was much against the desires of the Army and they

did it only under duress and because of Greeley's persistence with influential friends, but at least it was a governmental effort. This expedition was much more poorly mounted than that of Lewis and Clark who were, after all, travelling in more or less temperate climates where their native ingenuity and frontier experience might enable them to live off the land. Greeley, on the other hand, was going to a land where nothing would be available, where the climate itself was an adversary of no mean proportions. That even six men out of twenty-one made it back is a tribute to Greeley rather than to the preparations for the trip or for the relief of the expedition made by the government.

Then in the early nineteen-thirties this country officially sponsored a voyage by Admiral Byrd to the South Pole. Although this was under the official sponsorship of the U.S. Government, a large part of the funds came from Admiral Byrd and other private donors, and certainly all the work was performed by private citizens. Even the minimum amount of help from the Navy was grudgingly given. But the government was learning, or at least they were beginning to become active in the field.

Then comes the modern - today's - period of exploration. The initial effort once again was at the South Pole with the many expeditions of the International Geophysical Year, during which hordes of men and fleets of ships went to Antarctica. But this was not truly exploration, for all the major landmarks had by then been established by private and individual efforts. Rather it was scientific aims that drove them. Given sufficient funds, sufficient transport, supplies and the myriad supporting facilities, it would be possible to set up a city at the South Pole and keep it going for

a year - and that was done and cannot be minimized. Brave and devoted men did it. In all of it there was still somewhat of an aura of individual accomplishment, even though the name of no individual stands out.

For the future, there is the trip to the moon. Again, men will do it. The government does not go to the moon - a man does. But with a vast difference. A man is picked to go. He may volunteer, and there may be other willing volunteers, but the major task is done entirely anonymously by thousands of other men. Organization of a moon voyage is by committee, not by the driving force of one man who is determined to go and who tries and tries and tries again, the way Peary eventually made it to the North Pole. A trip to the moon has become a matter of national policy. This is so not because there would be any dearth of men who would organize such a trip by themselves or who would hesitate because of the risks and unknown dangers, but simply because the expense of such an undertaking is far beyond the powers of anything but a rich government.

Contrast this moon type of exploration with that of prior years. Today very little, if any, of the success of a trip to the moon, or of a successful orbit of the earth in a spacecraft, depends upon the skill or technical competence of the man making the trip. This tourist is merely along for the ride. The entire job has been done by the time he walks across the gangplank to his craft. Months and years have gone into preparation, and success depends upon its adequacy. There is no Zanzibar where a supply of brass wire to placate natives can be bought. When the fuse is lit at Cape Canaveral every eventuality has been thought of, every calculation made and checked and the trip itself is made just to prove they were right.