

*Not / Pöer kontaktet
sendes notatet*

CONFIDENTIAL

100 Ivor Court,
Gloucester Place,
London, N. W. 1.

February 14, 1970.

Mrs. Vibeke Eeg-Henriksen,
Norsk Polarinstitut,
Middelthuns g 29,
Oslo.

Dear Mrs. Eeg-Henriksen:

I hope, in view of the purpose of this letter, you will excuse an intrusion from a complete stranger, and in a foreign, possibly incomprehensible, language. Your name was mentioned in a letter to me from Mr. Kjell Armljot Wig (to whom I am sending a carbon of this letter), of Norsk Rikskringkasting.

For a long time - very nearly six years - I have been writing a book, which I am now winding up as quickly as possible. Its subject is the steamship Californian, one incident in which (fittingly described by Mr. Wig as "un cas sombre") is within your knowledge, namely the very dubious diary of the late Henrik Bergethon Naess. The vital part, so far as this question is concerned, is about the period of the Titanic disaster, April, 1912. Mr. Wig has written that you have completely failed to discover any such document, although you have found Naess's diary for around 1900.

I write now to ask whether you would be kind enough to answer the following questions: (1) I received Mr. Wig's latest letter on December 20th last. Is it still correct that the diary has not been found? (2) Almost exactly two years ago (February 19th, 1968), a television programme called "Captain Lord and the Titanic" was transmitted in this country. I myself did not see it, but from a reading of the script and from several reports of persons who did see it, there was a scene referring to "the reminiscences of . . . Henrik Naess . . . One passage of his book tells of an incident . . ." The Narrator then held up a book. Am I right in assuming no such book by Naess has ever been published, and that there is no basis in fact for this suggestion? (3) Has it ever come to your knowledge that this whole story of the Samson and the Titanic was not new in 1962, and that it had first been disclosed in 1912, shortly after the disaster?

Finally, I should be very grateful, if you would tell me if you have ever formed any opinion yourself of the whole incident.

I am sorry to trouble you, but I hope you will give me any help you can, as I am very anxious to neglect no possible source of truth. With many thanks in anticipation, believe me,

Yours sincerely,
Leslie Reade
Leslie Reade

cc: K.A.W., Esq.

EXPRESS

CONFIDENTIAL

Your Ref.: VEH/GE

100 Ivor Court,
Gloucester Place,
London, N. W. 1.

March 6, 1970.

Mrs. Vibeke Eeg-Henriksen,
Norsk Polarinstitutt,
Middelthuns GT. 29,
Oslo 3.

Dear Mrs. Eeg-Henriksen:

I am very grateful for your most interesting letter of March 2nd, received this morning. In view of the now urgent situation in which my publication arrangements are, I am replying immediately by express.

It was new to me to hear that Naess's journal had actually been accepted for publication. Mr. Wig some time ago was good enough to send me a copy of the Titanic portion of the journal, which he had had translated for me. However, I should very much like to see a copy of Naess's 1939 letter, which you describe. Would it be possible to have a xerox, or other photo-copy, made of this, and an English translation?

I should also regard as important and valuable the two other items you name, that is, the interview with Naess in "Arbeideravisen" for June 9th, 1928, and p. 238 of "Norsk Geografisk Aarbok. 1916-1919". Could you kindly have these two also photo-copied and translated for me? I would like to see these three documents as soon as possible, so that I could still include any reference to them in my account of the whole incident in the book. Mr. Wig informed me that photographs of Naess were available, and I asked him please to get me a glossy print of one of these, perhaps the closest to 1912, if it is a good likeness, or another, if the later one is better.

I shall be glad to reimburse you for any expense reasonably incurred on this work. My publishers, of course, do not pay for these matters, but I feel bound not knowingly to neglect any leads, and the information in your letter is new to me.

What you write about the non-existence of the alleged book displayed on tv two years ago does not surprise me. I am quite satisfied! I also note your opinion about the relationship of what I have read of Naess's Titanic journal to the disaster and her officers; and I entirely agree. (re Titanic's)

I look forward eagerly to your reply, and meantime thank you again.

Yours sincerely,
Leslie Reade

Leslie Reade

cc: Kjell Arnljot Wig, Esq.

7.3.1970

Leslie Reade Esq.
100 Ivor Court
Gloucester Place
London N.W. 1

England

Dear Mr Reade

Enclosed you will find copy of:

Det Norske Geografiske Selskap. Aarbok 1916-1919, p.238,
Kra 1921, +translation of the part concerning "Titanic"

Copy of letter from Næss to A. Hoel - with translation
of the part concerning "Titanic"

Translation of interview with Næss in "Arbeideravisa"
1928. (A copy of the original has been ordered for
you to be sent direct from the University library.)

Miss Turid Skancke is doing the translations. She will en-
close her bill for the cost of the translation + mailing
charges. Payment should be to her, not to the NP.

From "Adresseavisa" Trondheim, I have ordered a photo of
Næss to be sent to you. They carried an obituary of him
on June 22, 1950 - and if they can locate the photo in
their files, you will get one. The "Arbeideravisa" also
carried a picture June 21, 1950 - if the "Adresseavisa"
cannot locate their copy, they promised to contact their
colleague on your behalf.

If you get enough free copies of your book to spare one
for our library we should be very pleased. If not, a
photocopy of the relevant pages would make an interesting
addition to our file on Henrik B. Næss.

Yours sincerely

Vibeke Eeg-Henriksen

100 Ivor Court,
Gloucester Place,
London, N. W. 1.

March 24, 1970.

Mrs. Vibeke Eeg-Henriksen,
Norsk Polarinstitut,tt,
Middelthuns GT. 29,
Oslo, 3.

Dear Mrs. Eeg-Henriksen:

I was not only very grateful to you for the trouble you took to fulfill the requests in my last letter, but also much impressed by the speed and efficiency with which you did so. Your letter with its various enclosures reached me no later than the morning of the 11th. I feel very remiss that my thanks and reply have been so slow. It happens that part of my delay has been the result of a sudden hampering, though not serious, illness of my wife; but the chief cause is apparently the contrast in the way things seem to be done in Norway and in England. I was able to get a draft to send to Miss Skancke only last Friday; I hope she has received it.

I looked with great interest at the 3 copies of the Naess documents, the extract from the the extract from the "Norse Geographical Yearbook", the interview in the newspaper "Arbeider-Avisen", and his letter to Dr. Adolf Hoel.

In view of the use that has been made here of Naess's "Journal" in connexion with the Californian affair, there is a question of dates. Unfortunately, without a photo, or xerox, of the date of the publication, it is not of much value as authentication. The Museum, I have discovered, do not have the "Geographical Yearbook", and their Newspaper Library at Colindale don't have the "Arbeider-Avisen". I had hoped they might have, so that I could get it copied again, with the running title and date at the top of the page. So I am returning it, perforce, and asking them kindly to do it over.

I have found a file of the "Norske Geografiske Selskap Aarbok" in the library of the Royal Geographical Society, and although I have not seen it, the librarian has told me over the telephone, that the volume 1916-1919 has a title page with the date, which would have to do. But, again, I am frustrated. I am told the R.G.S. have no copying apparatus, and would not let out the book to have that title page xeroxed. Would it be asking too much if I trespassed still further on your time and good nature, if I asked for a xerox of the title page for the year 1916-1919? The volume is published, as you wrote, in 1921, but I couldn't get any information from the librarian as to whether the article, of which p. 238 is part, contains any clue as to the actual year in which it was written.

In view of the information you have given me about the references to Naess's adventure in publications dated 1921 and 1928, of which I had not heard (although I knew of something far older), I am adding something to my text. I also have quoted your comment about that mythical book displayed on television here. I was quite satisfied with what you wrote, but I went through the motions of checking the catalogues of the B.M. and the Library of Congress, and British Books in Print for the year covering 1968. All, of course, are blank. If you object to my using your name, I would attribute the comment merely as "from the library of . . . "

Now, I await with much interest the ^ophotograph of Capt, Naess.

I note your request about my book, and I am flattered. In fact, I doubt whether, except for one chapter, in which I deal with the Samson, it would be of any interest to your Institute. But I'll see how I am situated after publication, and certainly give you copies of my comments on the matter.

Meantime I look forward to hearing from you. My thanks again, and with all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Leslie Reade

Leslie Reade

April 3, 1970

Dear Mr Reade

05 256864

Since my last letter to you I have also spoken to Næss's son, Mr. Harald Næss, t.56864 Bergen. He told me that his father never published his diary.

I enclose the following photocopies:

- 1) p.296 of Norsk biografisk leksikon
- 2) title page + index to Norsk Geografisk Selskap. Aarbok 1916-19
- 3) reprint of above: title page, index + p.237-238.

To 1) and 3) I have added translations of passages which indicate the time when the article in 2) was written.

I hope this will sufficiently authenticate your text.

You may use my name in this connection - but I do not think it will be of much avail. I have been in charge of the library of NP for some time. I do this on part-time and also study for the degree in librarianship. As the final exam is still more than a year off, I feel that it is better to make it quite clear that any comment on my part is based on the fact that I am in a position to put available information at your disposal. It does not carry the extra "weight" of professional standing.

I also feel that it is right to tell you that we at the NP are as much beset by lack of funds and time as everyone else. The "speed and efficiency" with which your request was handled are due to the fact that your letter put a long smouldering curiosity on my part ablaze, so that the "samson" was given the VIP-works for a while.

One of my aunts used to tell about a friend of hers who was hankering to see the new world - but he was the beloved only son and only child, so his parents were afraid to let him cross the fickle ocean. The one evening as she sat with her parents and sisters and brothers at the supper-table her friend came running into the dining-room and shouted out to every-body that now he was finally going - since this wonder-ship could carry him so that his parents were no longer afraid to let him go. - Well, he was not among the rescued, and his parents isolated themselves for the rest of their lives.

At the NP I had heard mentioning of a diary, but I always have more to do there than I can cope with - so I never took the time to hunt for clues. So your letter was really a good excuse to put other things aside ~~;~~ ~~the norassosif~~ it has helped ~~the body~~ ~~renew~~ ~~with~~ the past.

x And I must say I enjoyed my rendezvous with the past;
the more so if it has helped
somebody else.
Yours sincerely

100 Ivor Court,
Gloucester Place,
London, N. W. 1.

April 13, 1970.

Mrs. Vibeke Eeg-Henriksen,
Norsk Polarinstitutt,
Middelthuns gt 29,
Oslo 3.

Dear Mrs. Eeg-Henriksen:

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of the 3rd, received the 6th, and the enclosures. I was interested to see that Naess was considered to be of sufficient interest and importance to be listed in the Norwegian Biographical Dictionary, and I also noted the little picture of him on p. 237 of the Yearbook. Unfortunately, this doesn't look good enough to be reproduced, and I hope the picture will be sent to me from the source you mentioned in your earlier letter. You certainly now have given me enough to date and authenticate the Titanic mention. With the apparent standing that Naess seems to have had, the Samson affair becomes the more curious.

I am obliged to you also for letting me quote you. I shall merely mention your name, "from the library of the Norsk Polarinstitutt".

I have heard somewhat similar stories to that told you by your aunt, and it is quite possible they are all true, for the fear of the ocean was not uncommon and the "unsinkable" cachet given to the Titanic well known. I do know of a man who also was very eager to visit America, but was also distrustful of ships. The Titanic likewise lured him to the voyage, but he was saved. This incident is beyond question as I knew the man concerned until his death a few years ago.

I would like to say how impressed I am by the excellence of your English, and the charm of this last letter of yours was really delightful. I wish you good luck with your exam, and in all else. Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Leslie Reade

Leslie Reade