

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,

*Journal of Glaciology*

SIR,

*About the use of the expression "inland ice"*

In much recent glaciological literature the Danish word *Indlandsisen*, and its equivalents *the Inland Ice* (English) and *l'Indlandsis* (French) have caused some confusion. These expressions have been used as synonymous with "ice sheet" or "ice cover", as well as in a more restricted way to mean the Greenland Ice Sheet. It might therefore be of interest to clarify the origin of the word *Indlandsisen*, from which the terms *the Inland Ice* and "*l'Indlandsis*" are presumably derived.

It is significant that the expression "*the Inland Ice*" is generally used with the definite article, just as in the Danish word *Indlandsisen* (*-en* being the definitive form). This alone implies that in both languages the term denotes a specific ice mass and is not merely descriptive.

Concerning the origin of the word *Indlandsisen* the Danish geologist K. J. V. Steenstrup (1900, p. 278) wrote "Concerning the origin of this name, Dr. Rink has informed me that he on his return from Greenland in 1851 was not sure what he should call the general ice cover of the country, until then called the Ice Blink (*Isblinken*), to distinguish it from the ice cover of the peninsulas and islands, and when he on that occasion asked Forchhammer and Jap. Steenstrup for advice, the last named suggested to him the name of *Indlandsisen*" (translated from Danish by the present writer).

Of the individuals mentioned by K. J. V. Steenstrup, H. Rink (1819–1893) was the first to draw attention to the Inland Ice and the problems concerning its production of calf ice and its origin (Kayser, 1928, p. 367; Oldendow, 1955). J. G. Forchhammer (1794–1865) was professor of mineralogy at Copenhagen University from 1831 and Japetus Steenstrup (1813–1897) professor of zoology at the same university from 1845. K. J. V. Steenstrup (1842–1913) who is quoted above and who was a nephew of Japetus Steenstrup, made extensive investigations of the west coast of Greenland between 1871 and 1899.

There is no doubt that the word *Indlandsisen* originally meant an ice cover, barred from the sea by a generally wide coastal land strip and, in contrast to normal glaciers, of an immense extent and with a base situated at sea-level. Furthermore, from its origin, it is clear that the name is restricted to such an ice cover in Greenland. "The Inland Ice" or *Indlandsisen* should therefore be emphasized as a place name rather than as a descriptive term for an ice sheet; just as the Sahara is the great Libyan desert and not a synonym for "desert", *Indlandsisen* is the great Greenland Ice Sheet and not a synonym for "ice sheet". To talk about "the Antarctic Inland Ice" or worse, "the Pleistocene Scandinavian Inland Ice" is therefore not correct. It is proposed that in future the word *Indlandsisen* or the English equivalent "the Inland Ice" is restricted to its original meaning: the ice sheet of Greenland, and that the general expression for extensive ice covers elsewhere or at other times should be "ice sheet" or "ice cover".

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Kayser, O. 1928. The Inland Ice. (*In Greenland*. Copenhagen, C. A. Reitzel, Vol. 1, p. 357–422.)  
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Steenstrup, K. J. V. 1900. Beretning om en undersøgelsesrejse til øen Disko i sommeren 1898. *Meddelelser om Grønland*, Bd. 24, Nr. 3.

SIR,

*Walsh Glacier surge, 1966 observations*

Walsh Glacier (Canada and Alaska) was observed making a remarkable surge between 1961 and 1965, a maximum movement of about 10,050 m. occurring during that interval (Post, 1966). Oblique