

becomes so large that it eats off the vegetation, it will become weakened by hunger and subject to disease. Natural enemies, such as the wolf and weasel, will catch many of them, and most of those remaining die of disease. When he left northern Alaska, Bee estimated that the lemmings had eaten sixty per cent of the grass. Next spring the remaining grass under the snow will have been eaten and the cycle of starvation and disease he expects will depopulate the region of lemmings.

Capture Rare Mammals

Among the specimens brought back were two rare arctic mammals. Resembling the woodchuck, this animal is called the sic-sic-puk and in books is named hoary marmot. Highly prized among the Eskimos because its thin, pliable hide and thick fur makes the best parkas, the sic-sic-puk is difficult to trap. If he becomes frightened he goes into his hole and hides for the rest of the day, Dr. Hall says. It takes a lot of patience to catch a sic-sic-puk, and Dr. Hall explained that Bee has just the kind of patience it takes to capture a couple.

Eskimos are about as scarce in most of this region as trees. The native population has decreased in the area as a whole. Some have moved to the cities of Alaska where living is easier. Some 1,200 live near Point Barrow, and a few hundred more live at scattered points along the Arctic Ocean. Seventy live about 200 miles inland at Anaktuvak Pass in the Brooks Range.

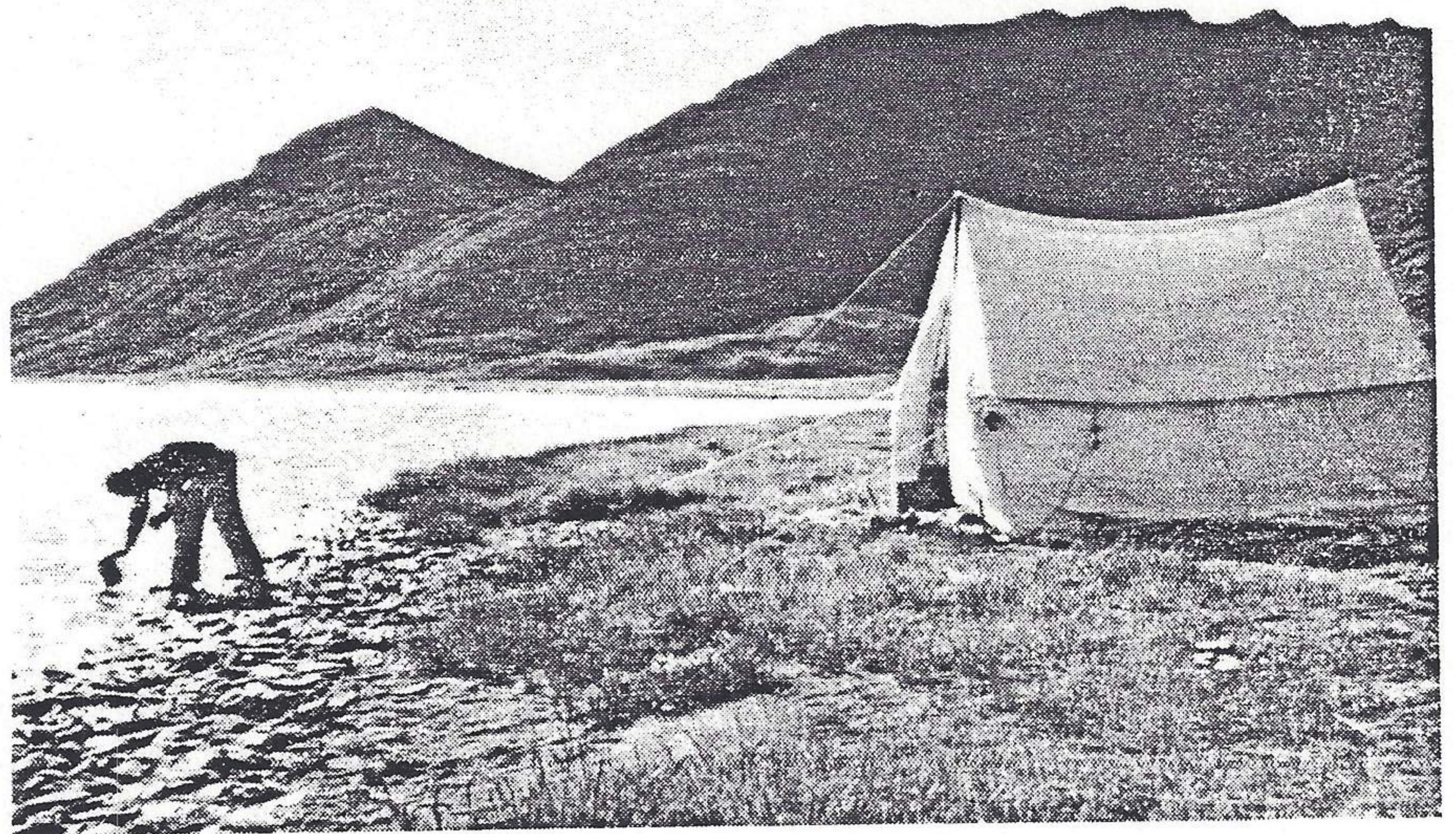
Names Mountain Peaks

The Brooks Range runs east and west and forms the great divide of Alaska. Rivers north of the Range flow into the Arctic Ocean, and those south drain into the Pacific. Much of the Brooks Range is unexplored, and Bee named mountain peaks after his wife and three children.

Unlike other expeditions, the K.U. party did not have any "adventures" in this far off land. Dr. Hall said that "Expeditions from the K.U. museum should not have adventures because adventures usually result from careless preparation or from persons taking unnecessary chances."

The nearest thing the field party had to an adventure took place when the weather closed in and airplanes were unable to fly the men out for five days. They ran short on food, but Bee said they were able to catch plenty of fish. He remarked that it was just like fishing in a hatchery. All they had to do was throw in a hook and pull out "a big one."

However, the area is not a potential fisherman's paradise because the growth of the fish is slow and intensive fishing would soon deplete the supply.



LAKESIDE CAMPS LIKE THIS were the bases from which K.U. staffers worked the surrounding country trapping specimens for the Museum of Natural History. J. Knox Jones, graduate student from Lincoln, Neb., dips a pail of ice cold water from the glacier fed lake. Bush planes landed the K.U. explorers on the lakes and picked them up periodically. Airplanes are the only practical method of travel in this unsettled country where bears, caribou, and wolves are the largest inhabitants in this land of the midnight sun.

Learning what kinds of mammals are in Northern Alaska and then learning the geographic distribution of each kind provides basic information necessary for efficient follow-up studies on animal borne diseases transmissible to man. Such field trips also furnish economic information on fur-bearers. It was because of the scientific value of the K.U. zoological work that the government agreed to lend its support for the two arctic expeditions.