

cond ministers had made this their home, the third having lived in the neighboring Hnaua, and the last one, Rev. Oddur Gislason, had dwelt here the whole eight years of his tenure of office. It angered this group of leaders to learn that a congregation of a much later settled area and from a village in the barest infancy, were proposing to snatch this focal point of cultural activity and move it to a far less deserving location.

However, the decision had been reached at a regularly called meeting, where they lost to the energetic opposition and they could only blame their failure on their own excessive self assurance, and blindness to the determined antagonism of their neighbors.

At the meeting in June, 1911, to discuss this newest problem, there was little that could be done to offset the decision already made. The Ardal leaders were ready to go ahead with their building whether the Icelandic River organization joined in or not. As everyone was of the opinion that the minister should have a new house, for he was popular and well liked, they could scarcely do less than agree to go along. None the less, the meeting delegated their chairman, Johann Briem, with Larus Bjornson and K. Olafson, to compose a letter in reply to the one received from the Ardal secretary, indicating their readiness to pay their proportionate share of the construction costs of the new house. At the same time they wished to make it perfectly clear that henceforth they would disassociate themselves from any future maintenance costs. The house was built during the summer of 1911, and the Rev. Johann Bjarnason and his family moved in to occupy it that fall. It was built at the approximate cost of \$1200 and the Icelandic River congregation paid its allotted share. The disclaimer of future responsibility soon became a dead letter for when later a popular and deserving minister wanted something done, that was considered necessary, the original disavowal was conveniently overlooked.

This grasping act of encroachment upon the prestige and position of a neighboring community had hardly been expected nor deserved by the Icelandic River community. It was, however, merely a reflection of acceptable practises in this new world where men of energy and vigour, oftentimes with little scruples, attained their objectives by riding roughshod over their neighbors. It was only the first of such acts, others were to follow, and perhaps the Icelandic River leaders were to blame in that they lacked foresight and the adaptability to protect their own interests.

The next few years were somewhat quiet and uneventful. Johann Briem remained at the helm and guided as well as he could, the destiny of the congregation. Jonas Jonasson, who had served over many years as secretary, finally retired from that office, and was replaced in 1913 by Victory Eyjolfson, eldest son of Gunnsteinn Eyjolfson. Halfdan Sigmundson, who had worked so hard to collect contributions for the newly built church, continued as secretary, and managed to raise the necessary funds to keep the organization in a healthy state. The only