

# Reviews

## PROBLEMS OF THE CANADIAN NORTH

**NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT: THE CANADIAN DILEMMA.** Page, R. 1986. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart. 361 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7710-6927-8. Can\$15.95.

Canada, a country of enormous size, great potentiality and many problems, has provided a focus, these last 15 years or so, for most of the issues that are associated with the phrase 'northern development'. Should this huge and profoundly impressive piece of the earth's surface be 'developed' at all? Should it be preserved or protected, even when 99% of the population both will never see it, and are eager to benefit from its presumed mineral wealth? And what about the people whose homeland it is; do they have a view, and if it is different from that of southern Canadians, which should prevail? These sorts of questions have been worrying many Canadians, for one must realize that 'the north' has a kind of mythical significance in Canada, constituting a very special strand in the national consciousness, and one of the few on which all have thus far appeared to agree.

Professor Page's book examines in some detail the major events of these years as they affect the north. Oil had been found in northern Alaska, and there was every likelihood that the structure extended also into Arctic Canada, where a rather unsuccessful search had already been going on for a decade, at a relatively low level of intensity. This situation was instrumental in the setting up of two highly important public enquiries, one (presided over by Judge T. R. Berger) to inquire into the terms and conditions for granting a pipeline right-of-way up the Mackenzie valley, the other, hearings before the National Energy Board. Both lasted many months; each did things which had never before been done in Canada, and each had a very considerable public impact. Page was closely associated with both. Woven into these two public hearings were many related issues. The Berger Commission put particular emphasis on rights of native peoples and on conservation matters; the National Energy Board on economic questions and, by extension, on foreign relations, especially with the USA. All of them were points of great interest for Canada as a whole, for they touched on fundamentals, but in a context which was remote from most people's experience and therefore easier to have an opinion about.

Page describes and analyses with admirable clarity and balance, but he is by no means a dispassionate observer, hiding his own views. He is concerned to tell us that there is indeed a dilemma, and a very serious one, which can only be overcome if Canadians 'exhibit a will and a flexibility they have not exhibited in the past'. His book is well written, well produced, and with very few typographical errors. It deserves to be widely read. One tiny note of criticism, probably of the publisher rather than the author: running heads are helpful to those—surely the majority—who do not read the book at a single sitting. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

## WHALING IN THE WESTERN ARCTIC

**WHALES, ICE AND MEN: THE HISTORY OF WHALING IN THE WESTERN ARCTIC.** Bockstoce, J. R. 1986. Seattle, University of Washington. 394p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-295-96318-2. US\$29.95.

Bockstoce presents a historical account of American bowhead whaling in the vicinity of Bering Strait, from the arrival of *Superior* of Sag Harbour, New York, in 1848 to the

collapse of the industry sixty years later. The book is written in a style which vividly portrays the conditions and problems encountered in Arctic whaling, and one which reflects the author's long personal experience in these waters, including hunting with Eskimo whaling crews. The author details the preparations for a whaling voyage, and problems encountered en route to the whaling grounds. He describes hunting, capturing and processing techniques, and compares them with Eskimo methods. The development of the industry is related, from the initial successes of the first two seasons to the subsequent decline due to decreased whale stocks, and to the whales' adaptation by going further into the ice. The destruction of the fleet by CSS *Shenandoah* in 1865 is documented, as are subsequent disastrous losses of vessels in 1871 and 1897 when trapped in ice. Walrus oiling, the introduction of steam whaling in the 1870s and commercial shore whaling from the mid 1880s are described. The book ends with an account of the Herschel Island fishery, until whaling stopped there around 1908 with the decreased demand for corsetry whalebone.

The industry is presented from an historical and economic viewpoint. Discussion on the morals of whaling, and the effects of whalers on the lifestyle of native communities from trading and social intercourse, is minimised. The text is profusely illustrated from private and public collections, and there are useful appendices on major events, catch sizes and product prices. Gazeteers of whalers' place names and whaling terms are included, together with an extensive list of repository sources and references. The book will appeal to those with scholarly or general interests in the western Arctic, and in all aspects of whaling. It is probably destined to become a classic in the extensive literature on American whaling: a most interesting and highly recommended book. (A. B. Dickinson, Department of Biology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Canada)

### HISTORY IN POSTCARDS

POSTCARDS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, A CATALOGUE: 1900–1950. Henry and Frances Heyburn, 1985. Picton Publishing (Chippenham). 255 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0 902633 99 6. £14.95.

This is a remarkable compilation which treats what might be considered a very narrow theme very broadly. Thus, through investigation and discussion of postcards with their messages and details of postal transmission, a fascinating amount of the history, social matters, and other aspects of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies is revealed. The proverb of a picture being worth a thousand words is very well proven. Although principally concerned with the Falkland Islands, descriptions and discussion of material from South Georgia and the South Shetland and South Orkney Islands is included. Much of the latter shows themes from the whaling industry and is from Norwegian sources. The catalogue is the result of many years work and is very comprehensive. However the authors recognize that to be complete is virtually impossible, and have solicited advice from readers about material they may have missed. Thus the work forms the basis of a continuing project. It concludes with a historical chronology (1899 to 1950), an excellent index, details of postcard publishers, and information for those who wish to study the postal (and other) aspects of the region further. I found it fascinating to see and recognize buildings and scenery shown in cards from early in the century, which I know from the last decade; and interesting to see much of what now no longer exists. On this basis I would give the book a particularly strong recommendation to visitors to the region. (R. K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)