

ECOLOGICAL SITES IN NORTHERN CANADA. EDITED BY D. N. NETTLESHIP AND P. A. SMITH. *Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the International Biological Programme, 1975. Available from Co-ordinator, IBP Committee, Panel 9, c/o Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa. 330 pages, illus. \$3.75.*

One great difficulty in safeguarding extensive areas of the Arctic landscape with its flora and fauna has always been the absence of a systematic inventory of biological resources. This understandable, but nevertheless regrettable, deficiency has in recent years resulted in bitter arguments between representatives of northern resource industries, who sometimes reason that their influence on ecosystems in the vast Arctic is surely minimal, and southern-based conservationists who in speaking so readily of the "fragility" of Arctic ecosystems often appear to object in principal to any development of the North. Both groups take advantage of the real ambivalence towards development on the part of native groups in Canada in order to bolster their arguments whenever it suits them. However, increasing demand for natural resources and the compromises inevitable between developers and conservationists will lead to gradual disappearance of the larger mammals and destruction of northern fish resources unless specific areas are set aside now to remain free in perpetuity from any development, or at least from certain kinds of development. The safeguarding of substantial representative samples of the Arctic landscape in their natural state could probably best be accomplished through the establishment of a number of large national parks, together with a substantial number of ecological reserves containing breeding and feeding areas important to particular species of birds and mammals. In the process, the restrictions necessarily imposed on the resource industries in their exploration and development of what will be still a small percentage of the Arctic landscape should serve not only to safeguard Canada's Arctic heritage for future generations but also to reduce public opposition to responsible development in the remaining areas.

The momentum gained in the institution of national parks in the Arctic appears to have been lost after the creation of the one on Baffin Island in 1972. At the same time, the establishment of ecological reserves has been retarded by the absence of a systematic inventory of the biological resources of the Arctic. With the publication of the present work by the Terrestrial Conservation Panel of the Canadian Committee for the International Biological Programme this need no

longer be the case. The Panel have listed seventy-one ecologically important sites which they believe should be seriously considered for protection, special management or study. The Panel included close to two dozen individuals — from government agencies, the resource industries and native groups — and received the support of other organizations, which are listed. The sites are first presented together on a map of the Arctic and subsequently considered on a regional basis. For each site there is a detailed map, followed by short descriptions of its physiography and biota, and complemented by a valuable bibliography. The sites include steep-cliffed islands with large sea-bird colonies, important caribou calving grounds and examples of desert landscape in the High Arctic. The editors, who have presented the material in a very readable fashion free of technical jargon, see the work as "an attempt to aid developers and development oriented agencies in their planning as well as a program for habitat preservation in Northern Canada".

With the publication of this book, and after the manifestly large amount of background work done by planners of Arctic parks within Parks Canada, the ball is more clearly than ever before in the hands of the federal government. Will the latter move vigorously to safeguard Canada's Arctic heritage for the benefit of all Canadians, or will it continue to deal in an ad hoc fashion with matters concerning the protection of the northern environment until most of the real reasons for the protection of it have disappeared? The members of the Terrestrial Conservation Panel and of their supporting groups and associations are to be complimented for making the inventory. It is now up to Canadians to urge their government to take appropriate action.

Jaap Kalf

THE LITTLE EMPEROR: GOVERNOR SIMPSON OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. BY JOHN S. GALBRAITH. *Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976. 232 pages, illus. \$16.95.*

Sir George Simpson, overseas governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1826 to 1860, was in both senses of the word a bastard. He was ashamed of his illegitimacy and, perhaps because of it, his vanity and arrogance earned him the epithet of this biography's title. In his time, Simpson must have been one of the best-hated men in North America. One sighs with relief to think that we shall not see his like again.

The stage on which Simpson occupied a

central position for so long was curiously set. Power came to him through no effort of his own: he was placed in high authority by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose creation he was and whose creature he remained. His first appearance among the fur traders of the Athabasca District in 1820 was that of management spy. Then, in the general reorganization that followed the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, he was given, partly because he was an outsider, the task of conciliating the two factions that had so lately been at war. He succeeded admirably in this difficult work, and the Governor and Committee gave him ever greater authority.

In this biography Professor Galbraith underlines Simpson's part in carrying out the Company's policies both in the fur trade and within the context of British geopolitics, a history that he has elaborated in another valuable study¹. Readers of *The Little Emperor* may wish to look also at volumes 29 and 30 of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, edited by Professor Glyndwr Williams^{2,3}. Professor Galbraith has contributed a long introduction to the first of these volumes where, annotated in splendid detail, there appear the letters Simpson wrote to the Company's headquarters during his well-known voyage around the world. Volume 30 includes the notorious "character book" in which Simpson recorded his judgements, most of them cruel, of some 160 of his colleagues in the fur trade. They are not attractive reading.

"The Hudson's Bay Company was not a philanthropic enterprise", Professor Galbraith reminds us. "It existed to make money from furs" (p. 61). During some forty years of the Company's almost unchallenged monopoly of the fur trade in British North America, Simpson ruled with that one object ever before him: to make money. His administrative ability and his shrewdness in business have been extolled by everyone who has written about him. It is my opinion however that, given the same authority, many of Simpson's colleagues could have done his work quite as well, and any of them might have done it without Simpson's personal nastiness.

Because Simpson took pains to leave on record as little information about himself as possible, this new biography is not much more than an account of his life in business. And, indeed, without psychological speculation, onto which quaky ground the author does not choose to venture, the book could not be much more. It is disappointing to have

to accept such a limited description of "one of the great business leaders of the nineteenth century" (p. x), but, in fact, there was no other Simpson: he existed only as a man of business. More than any Indian, he was a slave—a willing slave—of the exploitive machinery of nineteenth-century mercantile capitalism. Although he achieved power, prestige and wealth, his only satisfaction came from work and his only pleasure was in incessant rapid travel. If one looks for more than material success in a life, Simpson's is not an edifying story.

Alan Cooke

REFERENCES

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- ²Williams, G. (ed.). 1973. *London Correspondence Inward from Sir George Simpson, 1841-42*. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society. (vol. 29).
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VOYAGE TO GREENLAND: A PERSONAL INITIATION INTO ANTHROPOLOGY. BY FEDERICA DE LAGUNA. *New York: W. W. Norton, 1977. 285 pages, illus. with maps. \$9.95.*

This book, by one of North America's most distinguished anthropologists, offers some tantalizing insights into the personalities and events of anthropological and archaeological research in the late nineteenth-twentieths. It is not only a marvellously candid impressionistic account of a young girl's introduction to Arctic field research, but also a rare revelation of the development of the personality of an immensely successful scholar.

The author sets out clearly her terms of reference in the preface, which should not be overlooked. The book, compiled primarily from material in her field journal and letters to her family in Pennsylvania and Vermont, was written within a year of her return from Greenland in 1929. A number of comments and explanations, supplied in 1930 and 1975, appear in the form of bracketed inserts. The first third of the book deals primarily with the events leading up to the author's field trip to Greenland; her introduction to Therkel Mathiassen and Birket-Smith (of Fifth Thule Expedition fame) and the former's sudden invitation to join him on an archaeological expedition to West Greenland. De