

posing influences on such characteristics as fecundity, body size, growth rate, the number of species present, and ecosystem complexity, and the condition of any polar community represents a compromise or balance between them. Although Dunbar maintains that adaptation to the fluctuating environment has played a considerably greater role in the development of high latitude ecosystems than has evolution towards greater stability, he devotes a chapter to documenting the occurrence of extensive polymorphism at these latitudes and suggests that the accompanying diversification is a step towards increased stability and maturity.

In the final chapter, consideration is given to climatic stability, habitat variety, high productivity, large standing crop, predation, competition, and time as the major factors which encourage an increase in species diversity. Of these, the last is held primarily responsible for the present state of development of polar communities: under Pleistocene conditions, these ecosystems have not had time to develop the complexity, stability and maturity that are held to exist in such other systems as the coral reef and the tropical rain forest.

Dunbar has chosen to refrain from speculation as to possible mechanisms for the selection of ecosystem properties, and while this may be disappointing to many readers I believe he is sensible in doing so. I think it entirely possible that in time an explanation for the evolution of these properties will be found that is not at variance with the neo-Darwinian point of view, and it does not seem to me that Dunbar has closed the door to such a possibility. In any case the book stands up well on its other merits and should hardly be faulted for what it does not attempt to do. It is well written, clearly illustrated, virtually free of typographical errors, and is reasonably priced. It should have a wide appeal and deserves a correspondingly broad circulation.

F. C. Evans

THE FLORA OF GREENLAND. BY TYGE W. BÖCHER, KJELD HOLMEN, AND KNUD JACOBSEN, ILLUSTRATED BY INGBORG FREDERIKSEN. *Copenhagen: P. Haase & Søn's Forlag, 1968. 8 x 5 inches, 312 pages, 66 figures, 2 colour plates and a map. 90 Danish kroner; £5 (bound).*

In these columns, eleven years ago, this reviewer greeted the publication of the first edition of "Grønlands Flora", noting that

the urgent and long-felt need had now been met for a modern pocket guide to the flowering plants and ferns native to Greenland. In 1966 appeared a second and revised edition, also in Danish, of this now popular manual. Besides several new illustrations, the new edition recorded chromosome numbers for nearly all species, most of them based on Greenland material. Because the first and second editions of "Grønlands Flora" were also intended to be used in Greenlandic schools, both provided a brief introduction to botanical terminology, besides a short direction in Greenlandic, in the use of the manual. Throughout the text vernacular plant names in Danish and Greenlandic were added when they were available.

In the present English translation by T. T. Elkington and M. C. Lewis, of the 1966 edition of "Grønlands Flora", professional botanists outside the Scandinavian countries now will find a convenient and well illustrated guide to the vascular flora of Greenland. As with the earlier editions, the typography and printing are of high standard as is the reproduction of Miss Frederiksen's excellent drawings.

A. E. Porsild

FRONTIER ALASKA: A STUDY IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION AND OPPORTUNITY. EDITED BY ROBERT A. FREDERICK. *Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University Press, 1968. 9 x 6 inches. 172 pages, illustrated. \$2.00.*

This volume consists of the proceedings of a Conference on Alaskan History held at Alaska Methodist University in June 1967. Perhaps the greatest tribute I can pay is to say that having read the proceedings I regret very much having missed the actual meeting. Such feelings are rare.

The opportunity seems unlikely to recur. It was a brilliant idea by Morgan Sherwood which brought together such respected historians as Jeannette Paddock Nichols, Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Ernest Gruening and George Rogers, among others, and set them talking to an audience composed mainly of high school teachers from all over the state. It was also an idea which could have misfired, but the generation gap and the interest gap were bridged successfully and with humour. The result may not have been a major advance in Alaskan historiography, but it must surely have kindled enthusiasms for the future.

The various contributions are highly eclectic