

REVIEWS

ALASKAN ADVENTURE

By JAY P. WILLIAMS. *Harrisburg, Penn.: The Stackpole Company, 1952. 9 x 6 inches; xiii + 299 pages; illustrations, diagrams, and end-paper sketches. \$4.50.*

I know something of the country about which Jay Williams writes. I have been learning about it for more than twenty years, which is just about as long as I have known and admired Jay. His is a remarkable book. Many of us who are more or less familiar with southeastern Alaska, or the Prince William Sound country, or the Alaska Peninsula, have long accepted Jay as an authority on the country and its wildlife. Few of us, I suspect, have recognized his ability to set down in writing in simple, matter-of-fact, but somehow extraordinarily effective prose, his observations, knowledge, advice, and, above all, his feeling for the country and his appreciation of the subtle relationships between wild animals and their environment.

The book is a treasure-house of information about outdoors Alaska, especially about the larger game animals. The chapter on the Rocky Mountain goat (Chapter 3) impresses me as one of the best treatises on any game animal that I have read and certainly by far the best description of the goat and its habits.

The book is full of bear lore. Although I am in no sense a zoologist, I was not only amused by Jay's good-natured ribbing of the zoologists' practice of classifying Alaskan bears into many species, but I was also infected with the feeling that Jay knows what he is talking about. The last paragraph starting on page 97 and continuing on page 98 seems a classic of gentle irony in this respect, especially the sentence: "It had been duly determined in scientific conclave assembled, that his premolar on the right side was slightly longer and less eroded than his brother's, hence a new clan was born with himself as the founder."

Jay does seem a little rough on the bald eagle but, after all, he has observed a great many eagles at all seasons of the year and his opinion must be accorded very substantial respect.

The illustrations are the one disappointing feature of the book. Many of them appear to have been good photographs, but their reproduction is very poor and they do not do justice either to the country or to the game animals shown.

JOHN C. REED

OOK-PIK: the story of an Eskimo boy.

By WILLIAM G. CRISP, with drawings by JEAN CRISP. *Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1952. 8¾ x 6½ inches; viii + 151 pages; drawings. \$3.00.*

'Ook-Pik' describes a year in the life of an Eskimo boy at that exciting time when he is just becoming a man. For Ook-Pik it was an exceptionally full year. It begins in the fall when he makes his first sledge and trains his team of three young dogs. The winter is spent in learning to hunt on the sea ice, and in the spring he accompanies a constable of the R.C.M.P. on a long patrol by dog team to a post in the west. He is there for ship-time and then returns home by aircraft.

It is, of course, a child's book, but it is a faithful and sensitive account of the Copper Eskimo, and any child more than six years old should enjoy it. There is no upper limit to the age group. This is the sort of book that performs a real service to Canada. It promotes interest in a region that is daily becoming more important to the country but is frequently neglected in the schools, it provides authentic information, and it should give the young a better understanding of the Eskimo than their parents possess. I hope it has the success it deserves and that it is only the first of a series of similar books by Mr. Crisp who understands the north, and knows how to write about it.

G. W. ROWLEY