

the practical implications of engineering in permafrost. Throughout all chapters there are abundant references to a wide range of literature ideal for further study. The book covers mainly the Arctic with brief reference to low-latitude alpine permafrost areas. The Antarctic does not feature. One very minor criticism might be noted by geographers—introductory comments about the location and reasons for economic development are often discussed in simplistic terms. But these are minor and do not detract from overall value. The book, especially the first part, is the best available concise account of permafrost. It deserves to be widely read, and would be if only the price was more appropriate to the targeted readers. (David Sugden, Department of Geography, University of Aberdeen, St Mary's, High Street, Old Aberdeen AB9 2UF, Scotland.)

### THE ANTARCTIC CIRCUMPOLAR CURRENT: A SOVIET VIEW

STRUCTURE AND VARIABILITY OF THE ANTARCTIC CIRCUMPOLAR CURRENT. Sarukhanyan, E' I. 1986. Rotterdam, Balkema. (Russian Translation Series 44). 108p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 90-6191-467-1. £19.00.

This useful little book is a translation of a Russian work of 1980 vintage, and gives a coherent review of the results of two interlocking research programmes of the 1975–79 period. These were the Soviet POLEX-South and the US-led International Southern Ocean Studies (ISOS); both programmes were aimed at improving our understanding of the synoptic properties of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, and their aims and methods were so similar that the two projects developed a formal and fruitful system of collaboration. The results of the field studies, which involved the use of drifting buoys and current meter moorings as well as oceanographic station work, have given us a new insight into the complexity of the world's most important current system. The current varies immensely in time and space; it appears to be divided into filaments; it is greatly affected by bottom topography; and a large part of its energy is located in eddy motion. Concisely but adequately surveying these results, this book is a timely one—but only just, for the level of research activity in the Southern Ocean is now growing very fast, and a much higher level of insight will be reached within the next 2–3 years.

The book has no index, and minor mistakes mainly due to imperfect translation. Most irritating is the use of acronyms in which the Russian initial letters are retained; thus FGGE (the First GARP Global Experiment, with GARP itself an acronym for Global Atmospheric Research Programme) becomes the unrecognisable PGEP, or at times, FIGAP. A mysterious electronics company called Magnavoks is mentioned, and Canadians will be interested to learn that their ship *Hudson*, which laid current meters in the Drake Passage in 1970, is described throughout as American. But these are small blemishes in a useful book. (Peter Wadhams, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER)

### THE ICEBERG'S STORY

VOYAGE OF THE ICEBERG. Brown, R. 1986. London, Bodley Head. 166p. £9.95.

This is the story of the iceberg that sank the *Titanic*; or rather, the story of a typical iceberg that calves from the west coast of Greenland and ends its life in the North Atlantic. Richard Brown tells an exciting tale in a fascinating way. The history of the berg, and of the adventures which it may have undergone during its long drift, is interleaved with the history of the *Titanic* herself, her design, building, launch, fitting out, and the terrible complacency that underlay her first and last voyage. The fateful meeting of iceberg and

ship on the evening of 14 April 1912 forms the climax to the story. The iceberg (quite a small one according to a later sighting from a German liner) begins its life in 1910 in Jakobshavn Ice Fjord. From there with hundreds of companions it drifts north up the east side of Baffin Bay. On its way it encounters Knud Rasmussen, hunting for seals and folk tales; the whaleship *Morning* on her last season of bowhead-hunting in Melville Bay; the Polar Eskimos hunting seals, bears and dovekies; and Captain Bernier on sovereignty patrol in the *Arctic*. By 1911 it is drifting south off Baffin island and runs into Forsyth-Grant, the pirate sealer, who is lost with all his crew after trying to rob a trading post. It runs aground on the Funk Islands, drifting free in time to sail through the 1912 Newfoundland seal hunt. Then it drifts far southward in a streamer of drift ice which stretches away off the Tail of the Bank into the shipping lanes.

Meanwhile the well-known story of the *Titanic* is retold through the eyes of her passengers, from first class to steerage. On a calm, clear night, with sea ice around her and with radio reports of icebergs coming from other ships hove-to for the night, *Titanic* continues at full speed, an act of appalling seamanship on the part of her captain. The shortage of lifeboats is a product of outdated Board of Trade regulations designed to apply to much smaller ships. The tragedy is a monument to British complacency. Dick Brown is an ornithologist who has sailed the polar seas, north and south. The iceberg's story is an attractive vehicle by which he introduces the reader to the history and wildlife of the Canadian Arctic. Re-telling the *Titanic* story is also a timely service; now that she has been photographed on the seabed it is well to remember how completely unnecessary was her loss. (Peter Wadhams, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

### EARLY ACCOUNT OF THE TLINGIT OF ALASKA

TLINGIT INDIANS OF ALASKA. Kamenskii, Archimandrite A., translated and edited by Sergei Kan. (Rasmussen Library Historical Translation Series 2). 1985. Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press. 166 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-912006-18-18. US\$15.00.

The Rasmussen Library has followed up the excellent edition of Holmberg's *Ethnographic sketches* with this equally excellent version of Kamenskii's material on the Tlingit. An indigenous group of great significance to the social history of Alaska, the Tlingit often acted as middlemen between interior natives and traders from abroad. Kamenskii was a Russian Orthodox priest who arrived in Sitka after the sale of Alaska in 1895. This was the period just before the Klondike gold rush, which did much to transform Alaska and its native peoples. Kamenskii was not a 'neutral' social scientist, and much of Tlingit society, especially the matrilineal basis of its social structure, met with his disapproval. As we might expect, he was also adamantly opposed to shamanism. However, in the course of attacking these features of Tlingit culture and society, he also gives us some important information, and this monograph, translated from the Russian edition published in 1906, is a significant example of the Orthodox perspective on native life. Whilst there is much on which we might disagree with Kamenskii, this is a sensitive translation of an important historical document. The editors of the series in which it appears deserve both our congratulations and our gratitude for making a hitherto obscure account so available. (Ian Whitaker, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6.)