

domesticated reindeer use food resources between five and ten times more fully than do wild ones. This is an issue that needs to be resolved.

Other interesting topics are discussed, notably the transmission of illness between the groups. Here once again the editor sees things in a rather more optimistic light than some of his contributors. The final contribution is a summary of the caribou situation in Canada by E. V. Rogacheva.

Among the recommendations of the conference was the setting up of two bodies to continue study. One, an Interdepartmental Commission for Wild Reindeer Problems [Mezhdovedomstvennaya Komissiya po Probleme Dikogo Severnogo Olenya], was to co-ordinate policy, and was duly created in 1971, with Syroyechkovskiy as chairman. The other was a Problems Laboratory for Wild Reindeer Studies [Problemnaya Laboratoriya po Dikomu Severnomu Olenyu]. It was to be set up within the Research Institute of Agriculture of the Far North [Nauchno-Issledovatel'skiy Institut Sel'skogo Khozyaystva Kraynego Severa] at Noril'sk, the largest herd of wild reindeer (386 000 in 1972) being in neighbouring Taymyr; but it is not clear if this has yet come about.

A second conference on this subject was planned to take place in Yakutsk in 1974, and it is to be hoped that an equally informative volume will result from that occasion.

## POLAR VOYAGERS

[A review by Roland Huntford\* of Frank Rasky's *The polar voyagers*. Scarborough, Ontario, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1976, 320 p, illus. \$17.95.]

By his own account, Mr Rasky has set out to breathe life into 'the entire pantheon of major Arctic explorers'. As he points out, it has not been attempted before; and with reason. It is a daunting task. In the specialized Purgatory of recreating historical characters, the explorer is particularly elusive and diabolical. To touch him is to invite comparison with those historians of genius, Samuel Eliot Morison and Salvador de Madariaga, the biographers of Columbus.

What Mr Rasky has produced is a volume of curious gossip. This is not meant in any derogatory sense. All history is gossip. The work will help to fill in the contours of many Arctic figures; some more fully than others. Provided it is consulted with discretion, it will serve as a useful companion to the weightier surveys of Arctic history. The caveat is necessary. This is a journalist's book, with all that that implies. There is a constant striving for effect; the insistence on the snappy phrase. Research has clearly been thorough, but details are sometimes slipshod and Mr Rasky has perpetrated a number of irritating errors. It is nonetheless an entertaining book. Its greatest service may be in suggesting lines of further enquiry.

Starting with the Vikings, Mr Rasky presents the men who explored the north and brought the consciousness of the Arctic into the mind of western man. He touches the main actors: Hudson, Baffin, Barents; the 18th century explorers of Canada; Mackenzie and the Hudson's Bay Voyageurs. He also remembers the half-forgotten 17th century Dane, Jens Munk, one of the more poignant victims of the North-west Passage. They are considered not as explorers in vacuo, but as people put in the context of their times. It is an attempt to make them live as personalities.

Some of the information is intriguing and out of the way. For example, Mr Rasky tells us that: 'In Shakespeare's comedy, *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby Belch is told by a servant of Olivia: "You are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion; where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard." Shakespeare, who cracked many a quip at the expense of Elizabethan-era explorers, was here making a topical allusion to the icicled whiskers of an extraordinary Dutchman named William Barents.'

Mr Rasky is best on the early meetings between European explorers and the Eskimos. This was, one suspects, the theme that inspired the book, and the one which appeals to him most deeply. He is concerned to deliver the *coup de grâce* to what he would call a European racist-supremacist view. He is weakest at portraying the Norsemen and John Cabot, the 15th century explorer. This is understandable. Their mental landscapes are exceptionally difficult to grasp. The spirit of their respective times was far from our own.

\* Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge CB2 IER.

The book is well illustrated. Among the pictures is a splendid comic strip-type set of sketches of whaling in Spitsbergen by William Baffin and Robert Fotherby, his mate.

There is an idiosyncratic but useful bibliography. One omission, however, ought to be rectified. Nobody seriously interested in the Vikings' transatlantic voyages can do without G. M. Gathorne-Hardy's *The Norse discoverers of America*, the classic recension of the Saga texts.

*The polar voyagers* is the first of two volumes. The second volume will turn to the 19th century and the seekers after the North Pole.

## A CHANGING CULTURE

[Review by Ian Whitaker\* of Tim Ingold's *The Skolt Lapps today*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 276 pp., illus. £7.]

Dr Tim Ingold has written a book of considerable importance to the student of Arctic peoples. Based on a year and a half of field work between 1971 and 1974 among the so-called 'Skolt Lapps' of Sevettijärvi in the north-eastern corner of Finland, this is the fourth study in a series of anthropological monographs based on that particular ethnic group. The sequence started with the work of the human geographer Väinö Tanner (*Fennia*, Vol 49, 1929), and was continued by the ethnographic study of the same people in their original village of Suenjel by Karl Nickul (*Acta Lapponica*, Vol 5, 1948), and later by a study in the 'culture and personality' tradition by Pertti Pelto (*Kansatieteellinen Arkisto*, Vol 16, 1962). Although the Skolt Lapps therefore share with the Hopi the dubious privilege of being one of the most anthropologised groups in the world, it should be noted that Dr Ingold's predecessors held different intellectual allegiances. Ingold's work is firmly grounded in the 'British' structural functionalist tradition, or one of its offshoots, a perspective shared in Lappish studies particularly by the work of Robert Paine (Norway), the American Robert Pehrson, and the present writer (Sweden), but so far not intensively pursued by a student of one of the groups of Finnish Lapps. Ingold rather deviates from this tradition, however, by applying historical perspective to an understanding of some of the problems of the Skolts, as well as by using the concepts of brokerage developed by Barth and Paine.

A brief introductory chapter gives the vital facts connected with the Skolts' evacuation from their original territory as a result of changed international boundaries at the conclusion of World War II, a matter rather summarily dealt with. The main body of the book takes up three separate yet interconnected areas of enquiry: the present economy, the social structure of the Skolt community, and Skolt relations with the outside world.

The discussion of present-day reindeer husbandry is excellent. The transition from an earlier pattern of 'intensive' herding, whereby individual owners kept in fairly close contact with their own herds, to a more 'extensive' form, characterized by minimal contact between the owner and his animals and by the use of the snowmobile during the greater part of the year, is well brought out. The present situation has given rise to what Ingold calls 'predatory pastoralism', many an individual having so little contact with his own animals that a rational policy for exploiting his holding cannot be developed; instead he has to resort to 'hunting' an animal in a style reminiscent of an earlier period. Calf-marking has become much more difficult, and large numbers of unmarked offspring find their way into the common stock of the local association of reindeer breeders (*palikunta*) or, perhaps, are acquired by individuals illegally.

The changing pattern of reindeer husbandry has resulted in numbers of formerly successful breeders having to abandon their livelihood and take up other occupations. The opportunities for such alternative employment, as well as for the exploitation of subsidiary natural resources, especially fishing, are well described.

In the section devoted to the social relations between members and groups within the community, Ingold shows some of the problems that have arisen as a result of the original allocation of residences and of restrictions placed on the acquisition of fresh residential sites by members of families which may be splitting up, due to marriage of the younger members, or for other reasons. The temporary 'ossification' of the residential pattern determined at the time of resettlement, not, it

\* Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.