

weak point; it appears to me as if no one has taken care of this important facet of the book. For example, the compound heptachloro epoxide is independently listed as heptachlor epoxide and as hepta-chloroepoxide, each with additional entries. The same is true of the keyword hexachlorocyclohexanes. It seems to me that every author has prepared his own index, which then was merged in one without further editing. This weak point should be eliminated in the next edition. (Michael Oehme, Norwegian Institute for Air Research, N-2001 Lillestrøm, Norway.)

ANTARCTICA: BOTH HEAVEN AND HELL. Reinhold Messner. 1991. Marlborough, Wiltshire: Crowood Press. 381 p, illustrated with maps and photographs, hard cover. ISBN 1-85223-704X. £19.95.

This book tells the story of Reinhold Messner's 1989/90 crossing of the Antarctic continent with Arved Fuchs as his sole companion. The expedition travelled 2800 km in only 92 days, from the Ronne Ice Shelf to the American base at McMurdo, the two men pulling and sailing their sledges without the aid of dogs or mechanical means, and with the 'minimum' of air support (such details seem very important to Messner). The book is divided between the telling of the story of the crossing and several short chapters dealing with the Antarctic Treaty, a chronology of Antarctic expeditions, and the ideal of 'World Park Antarctica,' which Messner supports and which he states the expedition was to publicise.

However, the book's real story is the tale of a dispute (essentially over the presentation of the crossing in 'environmental' terms) that arose between Fuchs and Messner at the end of the trip. At times the book reads like the prosecutor's notes at a trial, each event seemingly being described to the reader for its place in Fuchs' supposedly scheming plan to misrepresent everything for which Messner stands. One of Messner's friends is quoted as saying, 'You, the star, are only taken advantage of' (page 47), and one suspects that this is the feeling he has about this trip. This is perhaps a feeling for which the reader will have little sympathy. No attempt is made to allow the reader to develop his own appreciation of what is happening between the two men — everything is presented in the perfect vision of hindsight.

The book does little justice to the quite amazing achievement of the two men and even less to the environment in which they found themselves. Messner writes, '...my knowledge of the Antarctic consisted of clichés: sterile, unimaginably big, cold' (page 26), but he does nothing to change one's perception of this with his own writing. He makes much use of quotations from the earlier explorers of the continent — Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton — giving entire pages on occasion. They are well chosen and interesting, although they unfortunately serve to show the poverty of Messner's own writing and to leave the reader wishing he had spent his money (for at £19.95 this is not a cheap book) on a copy of *The worst journey in the world* or *South*. When the next book about such a venture is written, the quotations from such early works will appear, not from this — a classic it is not! Antarctica deserves

better than this. (Stephen Wells, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE CANADIAN NORTH. Robert M. Bone. 1992. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 284 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-19-540772-5. £17.50.

There are so few good texts on the geography of Arctic Canada that any new one is to be welcomed. In this book, the 'Canadian North' is treated generously, with its southern limit the edge of the northern boreal forest where trees give way to prairie grasslands (excepting the southern part of the mountain forest of British Columbia and Alberta, and the black spruce forest of the Gaspé and much of Newfoundland). This results in a survey of approximately three-quarters of the land and sea areas of Canada. The north is sensibly split into the Arctic and the sub-Arctic macro-regions, the division between the two being considered as the treeline, which follows generally the mean monthly 10°C isotherm for July. Thus, this is a treatment in terms of the natural, rather than the administrative, regions of Canada, and one familiar to geographers, but the author prefers within this framework a systematic rather than a traditional regional approach. Whilst this creates difficulties in the non-correspondence between the statistics available for the natural — as distinct from the political — divisions, it makes for a more readable and lively text.

After introductory chapters on the perception of 'nordicity' and on the physical background to the north, the book concentrates primarily on resources and economic development. This allows the author to present his very detailed knowledge of the difficulties of resource exploitation — physical, political, legal, and environmental — in a multi-cultural society. He deals with the mega-projects of James Bay, the Arctic Pilot Project, and the Mackenzie Pipeline with admirable clarity. The book concludes with chapters on the problems of native land claims and regional self-determination, and the geographical realities of present times in these northern lands.

Each chapter of the book contains in appropriate places short vignettes that serve to highlight the main points for discussion; it is a device that exemplifies the essentially didactic purpose of the work. The book should prove to be invaluable for undergraduate courses on the geography of the Canadian north. (Peter Speak, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

BRIEF REVIEWS

EXPLORATION OF ALASKA 1865–1900. 1992. Morgan B. Sherwood. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xxii + 207 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-912006-62-5. US\$15.00.

This is a reprint of Sherwood's already classic 1965 study of the exploration of Alaska, including its political, scientific, and military components. Beginning with the Russian American Telegraph Expedition of 1865 and the purchase of 'Seward's Folly' from Russia in 1867, it covers three and a half decades during which the US Army,