

DR JOHN RAE. By R.L. RICHARDS. Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby (9 John Street, Whitby, England YO21 3ET), 1985. 231 p. + 6 maps, 31 illus., bib., index. £16.50.

John Rae was one of the most successful arctic explorers. His four major expeditions mapped, by his reckoning, 1765 miles of previously unknown arctic coastline. He proved that Boothia was a peninsula and that King William Land was an island. He was the first to obtain definitive evidence regarding the fate of the third Franklin expedition.

Rae was prepared for his later achievements by his childhood in the Orkneys and by ten years with the Hudson's Bay Company at Moose Factory. Of his Orkney activities Rae later said:

By the time I was fifteen, I had become so seasoned as to care little about cold or wet, had acquired a fair knowledge of boating, was a moderately good climber among rocks and not a bad walker for my age, sometimes carrying a pretty heavy load of game or fish on my back. All of these acquirements, often thought useless, were of great service to me in after life.

Upon completion of his medical training, Rae signed on as surgeon on the Hudson's Bay Company supply ship *Prince of Wales*. On its return voyage, this ship was detained by early ice conditions and forced to winter in James Bay. Towards spring Rae gathered cranberries from beneath the snow to cure the scurvy prevalent among the crew. He then stayed on as surgeon at Moose Factory. Here he learned the Indian methods of hunting, fishing, sledge hauling and camping; he made snowshoe walking his personal forte. Once after a house call to Fort Albany, he made the return trip of about 100 miles on snowshoes in less than 48 hours. In 1845 he studied surveying under J.H. Lefroy in Toronto.

Rae's first arctic expedition in 1846-47 mapped 625 miles of coastline from the northwest corner of Melville Peninsula to Ross Peninsula overlooking Lord Mayor's Bay. On his second expedition in 1848-49 he accompanied Dr. John Richardson in search of the missing third Franklin expedition; no new miles were mapped.

After a year as chief trader at Fort Simpson, Rae set out to map the south coast of Wollaston Peninsula by sledge and then the southern shore of Victoria Island to its eastern extremity by boat. Here he had no way of knowing that he was only about 50 miles from the abandoned *Erebus* and *Terror* near the west shore of King William Land, which he was unable to reach.

On his fourth expedition, in 1853-54, Rae obtained third-hand information from Inuit concerning the fate of the third Franklin expedition, purchasing plates, forks, and spoons with the initials of officers from the *Erebus* and *Terror*. He also explored 200 miles of the Quoiiche River and about 200 miles of Arctic coastline. He discovered that King William Land was an island, separated from Boothia by a strait now called Rae Strait.

On all his explorations, Rae travelled light, building his own igloos and shooting game. He could average 20 miles a day while dragging a sledge along the ice. He was innovative and resourceful, showing incredible stamina and superb marksmanship.

Dr. Robert L. Richards, a consultant physician at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, completed this well-organized and interesting biography shortly before his death in 1983. It is a pity that Richards did not live to see publication of his scholarly work.

Richards has uncovered valuable new information, including letters and unpublished manuscripts in various repositories in London, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Taunton, and elsewhere. He provides the most complete bibliography yet available of Rae's own writings, consisting of 26 published papers, 8 presentations to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and 42 letters to *Nature*.

Richards has been objective in presenting both sides of the controversies in which Rae was embroiled. Richards explains why Rae did not go himself to the scene of the Franklin tragedy and discusses the controversy over the best methods of sledging. Clearly Rae's reputation should not have suffered as it did, simply for relaying evidence that Franklin's men were involved in cannibalism.

The six maps are helpful, but they omit a few of the important place names mentioned in the text. An additional overall map of the Franklin search expeditions would have been helpful. Richards made an important geographical error on page 44: The one-mile-wide isthmus seen by Rae joined the Ross Peninsula, not the Boothia Peninsula as stated. I would have liked more detailed references in the already numerous footnotes, indexing of important names that appear only in footnotes, and a list of the maps and illustrations. Richards fails to mention that modern Canadian maps and the official *Gazetteer* give inadequate credit to Rae, sometimes giving his names to the wrong localities and misspelling Locker for Lockyer and Wilbank for Welbank. One of Rae's presentations to the British Association has been omitted. In a few places it would have been helpful to have given modern names of birds and mammals (Rae's "deer" are of course caribou).

This excellent, long-overdue biography of an important man is fun to read and a valuable reference work. It is highly recommended to everyone interested in the geography or history of northern Canada, a country in which Rae lived for 22 years.

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HOME AND NATIVE LAND: ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION. By MICHAEL ASCH. Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1984. ISBN 458-973807. 109 p. + appendices, suggested readings, bib. Cdn\$9.95.

The closer you are, the farther it gets.

Section 35 of the Canada Act, the definition of aboriginal rights, and the claims of Canadian native people to self-government are among the most complex issues facing the country's recently elected Conservative government. Their importance to the new government remains to be seen. We have, to date, mixed messages — a proposed amendment to section 35, much watered-down through provincial pressure and leaked reports that suggest fundamental changes in the relationship between the federal government and Indian nations. Canadians still need to become familiar with these issues — and perhaps to consider or reconsider their attitudes and opinions. A good book on the subject would certainly help.

The issues of treaty and aboriginal rights and self-government are of concern to Treaty Indians, those who have never signed treaties and who have outstanding claims, the Metis, the Inuit of the Northwest Territories and Quebec, and northern, southern, rural, and urban native people. It is, therefore, no surprise that there are different strategies and positions on native self-government. These are reflected in the positions of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), several Metis organizations, and the Prairie Treaty Nations Alliance, which tried unsuccessfully to get a seat at the last First Ministers Conference and which is still not affiliated with the AFN. Yet there is considerable agreement among native people in Canada on the ultimate objective: the recognition of distinct cultures, histories, and traditions and rights in the governing of their own affairs.

Asch has established a reputation as a major scholar writing about the South Slavey Indians and has worked with the Dene Nation for the past decade. However, as he acknowledges, in the process of writing *Home and Native Land* his horizons expanded and he included proposals and positions put forth by other groups. Despite his attempts to deal with aboriginal rights in general, the Dene come across as the main focus of Asch's attention. Knowing Asch's background in anthropology and experience with the Dene, I am left wishing that he had restricted himself accordingly and given us an in-depth assessment of aboriginal rights and self-government as advocated by the Dene nation. The book is stronger in the sections dealing with the Dene claims and less satisfying in its discussion of other groups. The

book, therefore, opens a useful discussion that could lead to more comprehensive debate.

Any publication that attempts to provide background information on the issues of aboriginal rights and the Canadian Constitution in a mere 109 pages is bound to have certain shortcomings. These might have been overcome by focusing on a clearly defined audience and dealing with the position of a specific group or groups sharing common geographical or other considerations. Asch attempts to deal with a complex subject and all native groups concerned with these issues. The result is less than satisfactory: a book, the style of which will not appeal to the general public — which badly needs to be better informed — and which, for the knowledgeable reader, presents not only little new information but some questionable assumptions, analyses, and conclusions.

Asch states that his book is for “individuals interested in the subject but who feel a lack of background information necessary to form firm opinions” (p. vii). He acknowledges that the book originated from a course on aboriginal rights and the Dene. As a text for undergraduate students, *Home and Native Land* will serve to raise questions and create interest in the aboriginal rights of native people. But the absence of visual aids — including maps, charts, and photos — restricts its appeal. Many Canadians are still unfamiliar with the Dene, their homeland, and the location of other extensive geographical areas to which native people have claims.

Asch develops four basic arguments in support of his thesis that self-government for first nations is feasible and desirable. He addresses the image and integrity of Indian nations and native people, argues that the law appears to be recognizing their claims, that government policy is slowly changing in favour of native aspirations, and that we can take things a step further. Self-government is not, Asch argues, inimical to liberal democratic tradition.

Asch does a credible job in claiming that native society is more than a culture of welfare and dependency. He uses the Dene nation as a case for his argument and relies on data with which most experts in the field will already be familiar. He references other studies that suggest that the claim for the Dene as a relatively intact hunting and trapping culture can be extended to other Indian nations. He further argues that native culture is, to a considerable degree, still intact in urban settings — a claim that experience confirms but which needs more substantiation and attention than Asch provides. However, his brief mention of urban native populations raises an important question in the mind of the reader. What are the implications of self-government and the definition of aboriginal rights for urban native people? Having suggested the question, it is a subject Asch ignores in the remainder of his book. Frideres (1983) indicates that about 27% of registered Indians lived off reserve in 1976, and recent estimates are that 40% of all native people in Ontario — status, non-status, and Metis — live off reserve (Taylor *et al.*, 1981). The unanswered question is an important one.

Following a presentation of aboriginal peoples' views of aboriginal rights — based primarily on the Constitutional Conference of 1983 — Asch examines aboriginal rights and the law. This is a complex subject to which Asch cannot do justice in 14 pages. Asch's optimism that there is something in the law for native people exceeds that of many lawyers. To date, the sad truth is that native people have won little from the law other than acknowledgement that aboriginal rights did — or do — exist. However, where courts have suggested their existence, they have refused to define them or, as in the Baker Lake case, have claimed that aboriginal rights were extinguished by subsequent actions of the colonizing people. Asch acknowledges this but holds forth the Calder case — which the Nishga lost on a technicality — as “defining for Canadian law the fundamental principle of aboriginal rights” (p. 54). It is arguable that the Calder case did anything quite so definitive. The experience of the Lubicon Lake Band in northern Alberta in trying to secure their rights to land in the face of oil and gas exploration and development further diminishes Asch's claims. Asch appears to have a linear and “progressive” view of historical developments with respect to the law — a view unsupported by a re-

cent Ontario Supreme Court decision rejecting claims of the Temagami Band to 9000 km² in northern Ontario. As Band Chief Gary Potts noted, “the judicial system is incapable of protecting aboriginal rights” — and in this, I would argue, he is far more realistic than Asch.

The limits to Asch's analysis are also obvious in the case of Treaty Indians. In order to argue that Treaty Indians still have aboriginal rights and a right to self-government, one must first establish that the treaty-making process was highly questionable — even fraudulent — and that Indian nations did not surrender all their rights to Her Majesty. Asch neglects this consideration entirely, leaving open the suggestion that Treaty Indians surrendered their rights, as well as lands, to the Crown. Asch does consider treaties later in his text but primarily in the context of emerging federal government policy. The matter of whether or not Indian nations did surrender their rights, and their perspective on the numbered treaties in Alberta, is the subject of Richard Price's *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties* (1979), an important work missing from Asch's bibliography and suggested list of readings.

Asch's third major point is to argue that federal government policy has evolved, through the '70s and following the introduction (and rejection) of the now infamous White Paper of 1969, toward a greater recognition of aboriginal claims. Asch holds out the possibility that the momentum will continue — a possibility that, he argues, hinges on whether or not self-government is inimical to the concept of liberal democracy. His final argument is, therefore, that the concept of self-government for aboriginal people is not inimical to liberal democracy. It is here, I believe, that Asch gets himself into serious trouble.

In order to make his point, Asch plunges into a somewhat academic discussion of liberal democracy and the concept of equality associated with the liberal democratic tradition. This he accomplishes in two pages before moving on to examine the protection of minority and ethnic rights in the liberal democracies of Belgium and Switzerland. The argument that ethnic minorities in both Belgium and Switzerland enjoy a certain degree of political autonomy and protection from the legislative power of the majority does little to convince the reader that the Swiss or Belgian experience is relevant to granting aboriginal people in Canada the self-government they seek. Canadians need to be convinced that self-government for aboriginal people is both a necessity and workable within the confines of Canadian history, geography, and political economy. Canada is not Switzerland, nor is it Belgium. A close examination of Belgium reveals that there are on-going racial and legislative problems with its democratic structure. The ethnic minorities of Belgium and Switzerland do not occupy the same historical, economic, and material circumstances as Canadian aboriginal people relative to a colonizing power.

Asch, therefore, appears to be a philosophical idealist, ignoring the role that aboriginal land and resources played and continue to play in the development of the Canadian economy and the accumulation of capital. Liberal democracy is far more than a set of philosophical ideals and organizational arrangements. It is also a collection of economic relationships and structures, which Asch, in his analysis, has chosen to ignore. Canadians not only need to be convinced that self-government is not inimical to liberal democracy but that liberal democracy has been exploitive of the interests and resources of people living in “frontier” regions — including, and especially, aboriginal people. Paradoxically, Asch's arguments in *Home and Native Land* suggest the real limits to traditional liberal democracy — limits native people face in defining aboriginal rights and in achieving self-government.

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NORTHERN ECOLOGY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

Edited by ROD OLSON, FRANK GEDDES and ROSS HASTINGS. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1984. xviii + 438 p., maps, illus., 13 coloured photos by George C. Calef. Hardbound. Cdn \$30.00.

This impressive volume is subtitled "Memorial Essays Honouring Don Gill," a captivating, energetic professor at the University of Alberta and director of the Boreal Institute there until his accidental death in 1979. (Its editors were his graduate students at the time of his death.) Following a warm appreciation of Gill by Professor Emeritus of the University of British Columbia J. Ross MacKay, it contains 17 invited essays arranged in four groups: Abiotic Components, Animal Communities, Plant Communities and Land Use.

Seven of the 17 essays could best be described as review articles. One is a comprehensive update on snow ecology and terminology by William O. Pruitt. Another, by J. Stan Rowe, examines aspects of lichen woodland ecology. Four are extensive accounts of prominent wildlife species: E.S. Telfer on moose, D.E. Russell and A.M. Martell on caribou, Manfred Hoefs on Dall sheep, and Ian Stirling, Wendy Clavert and Dennis Andriashek on polar bears. The seventh is on the impact of hydrocarbon exploration in northern Yukon, by H.M. French.

Of the remaining ten, four are essentially research papers, presenting original data on recent projects. These are C. Tarnocai on soil temperatures in the Inuvik area, Matti Seppala on deflation (removal of surface materials by wind) in esker country in Finnish Lapland, W.R. Archibald and R.H. Jessup on pine marten populations in Yukon, and G.P. Kershaw on floristic characteristics of disturbed CANOL Project sites. M.C. English's paper on the Slave River delta is at once a descriptive analysis and a prediction of impacts if an impoundment is built upstream.

The other five are commentaries: one by W.A. Pettapiece a scientific commentary on soil development processes in northwestern Canada; then three historical commentaries — by George W. Calef on the growth of a wood bison population introduced into an area northwest of Great Slave Lake in 1963, by William C. Wonders and Heather Brown on the recent history of Aklavik, and by Edgar L. Jackson on resource conflicts in Iceland. Finally, there is a policy commentary, on the initiation of a land use planning program in the Northwest Territories, by Norman M. Simmons, John Donihee, and Hugh Monaghan.

The editors state that the book is meant "to present information that will enable us to proceed in a manner that does not seriously compromise the fragile and unique northern ecosystem," implying that industrial growth is the basis of their concern. Kershaw's studies of disturbance sites from the CANOL Project are relevant to and indeed focussed on this objective. So are those reported by French, on hydrocarbon exploration in the Yukon. Jackson's observations on Iceland also relate. Stirling *et al.* provide a description of over three pages on possible impacts on polar bears, and English discusses the potential impacts of a Slave river hydro project. In a somewhat different area, the management of renewable resources rather than the regulation of industrial resource projects, Seppala's work offers

guidance to reindeer grazers, Hoefs's to managers of trophy hunting, Archibald's and Jessup's to managers of a furbearer, and so on.

With regard to industrial impacts, what can be concluded? Where oil was spilled, gravel excavated and roads built, on the CANOL, impacts are discernible after four decades; the original plant communities are not re-established. More lightly disturbed sites show varying degrees of recovery. In the northern Yukon, prior to imposition by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development of the Territorial Land Use Regulations in 1971, industry's operational procedures were not such as to protect the landscape from long-term alteration: since then, the situation has improved. Polar bear populations have been seen to recover already from one serious (but natural) reduction in arctic Canada, and, though individuals are demonstrably killed by exposure to oil, populations can probably recover, in time, from local catastrophes.

As the volume lacks a synthesis, one may be tempted to read one in the less narrowly scientific, more broadly ranging papers. For example, the lesson to be learned from Aklavik, "The Town that did not Die," is that residents must be "involved before the fact." The development of a land use planning process for the Northwest Territories must include planning for full participation by local publics. On a perhaps more equivocal note, "pragmatism and compromise are the key characteristics of nature conservation in Iceland."

This wide-ranging volume will be a useful reference to scientists interested in northern ecosystemal components. The review papers, such as on snow ecology, moose and caribou, will prove of great interest to northern naturalists. The impact papers, on the CANOL revisited, and on exploration in northern Yukon, will directly advance the aims espoused by Don Gill and his commemorators.

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THE 1823 LOG BOOK OF THE SHIP BAFFIN FROM LIVERPOOL. By WILLIAM SCORESBY, JR., F.R.S. Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby (9 John Street, Whitby, Yorkshire, England YO21 3ET), 1984. 136 p. £14.95.

If we were to bring back one of the Greenland and Davis Straits whaling masters of a century or more ago, all our questions would be answered in an hour. *Lloyds List* sometimes gave details of sailing and return, and perhaps speakings and catches, with occasional comments about ice and weather. Otherwise, apart from *The Arctic Regions*, 1820, by William Scoresby, Jr., and his account of his exploration of Scoresby Sound in 1822, there is little printed material.

The ultimate source now is the log books or journals kept by the masters at the time, and they are few enough in Britain. In 1916, the Explorers Club, New York, published facsimiles of 14 logs kept by William Scoresby, Sr., from 1786 to 1823. When the facts are extracted, tabulated and analysed, they provide an account of weather, ice, fishing grounds, and catch that cannot be found elsewhere, showing the differences between one season and another, besides recounting the events usual to such voyages. The 1806 log of William Scoresby, Jr., mate under his father in the *Resolution*, a successful voyage in spite of an unfavourable season, was published in 1981, and that is equally informative.

Here we have the journal kept by William Scoresby, Jr., on his voyage as master of the *Baffin* of Liverpool; it was his last voyage and it was not a success. The future for the trade was not promising, and he left the sea. It tells the story of a voyage of just over five months. It