

The book outlines the seismicity of Alaska and its geologic and tectonic setting. The Good Friday earthquake occurred beneath a small, mountainous, glaciated peninsula between College Fiord and Unakwik Inlet, just north of Prince William Sound and within the Coast Range orogenic belt. Crustal adjustments in geologically recent time have occurred, but it is not clear whether these are caused principally by the postglacial rebound of the earth's crust as a result of deglaciation or by cumulative orogenic movement.

The book is valuable as an object lesson in how effectively a large and complex government organization can respond to a crisis. One wonders, though, how a less prosperous organization in another country would react when faced with a similar problem. The detail in the book may be useful to the specialist, but it detracts from the value of the book to the intelligent layman. This reviewer considers the book too verbose, the usual consequence of multi-authorship. It does illustrate vividly, however, the effects of a disastrous earthquake on the fabric of a modern economy, and does enhance the continuing claim of the U.S.C.G.S. to play a major role in the expanded program of research into earthquake prediction which may arise in the U.S.A., partly as a consequence of the Alaskan earthquake of 1964.

Kenneth Whitham

THE ESKIMO OF NORTH ALASKA.
BY NORMAN A. CHANCE. *New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, Inc., 1967. 6 x 9 inches, 107 pages, \$1.95.*

This little book is one of a series of "case studies." The series is edited by Professors George and Louise Spindler of Stanford University, and now comprises analyses of over twenty-five cultures from all parts of the world. Each analysis runs to about 100 printed pages and is designed mainly to present to students at the undergraduate level some awareness of the variety of human socio-cultural systems, both as they exist today and in an ethnographic context. The general series has proved most useful in classroom situations, successfully introducing a sense of human society and culture in

action. Chance's description is the only one in the series so far which treats of arctic peoples. Others cover native peoples in Africa, Australia, the South Seas, and parts of North America other than the Arctic. Nor have the editors in the series ignored the concept of folk or peasant society; they have included descriptions of "little communities" in areas such as Mexico, Greece, Turkey, and the U.S.S.R., among others.

With the exception of some of the more remote and relatively isolated ethnic groups in New Guinea, and perhaps in sections of South America and Southeast Asia, there remain few truly aboriginal native worlds. Virtually all living human groups have been touched in some measure by Western culture. But it would be quite erroneous to suggest that because a people begins to share in the technology of the West or even to become ideologically changed, its ties with its own past and traditions are severed. The Eskimo of north Alaska offers a case in point. The machine age (with its material involvements), the school, the Christian churches, the enterprises of modern social welfare, not to mention the development of a money economy, might suggest that the past has gone. But this is not the case. Dr. Chance makes it eminently clear, by describing the bridge between past and present, that older modes do persist, even if informally, and that they still influence the behaviour of the Eskimos of the Point Barrow area. It is this feature which makes his study so worth reading.

The question which emerges is: How have the modern peoples of north Alaska managed to find a link between their own aboriginal institutions, structural as well as ideological, and patterns of Euro-American culture, thus discovering, in a sense, the best of both worlds? By a careful analysis of the modern scene, which discovers the roots of the Eskimo's present-day activities in his sense of the aboriginal past, Chance is able to define how native organization and character can accommodate ideas which come to it from the outside. What is remarkable, comparing the Eskimo with a great many other ethnic groups around the world, is the stability of his native institutions. Not that some signs of disorganization are not present, but constructive building and planning have enabled the Eskimo to bypass the

day when his whole socio-cultural structure might have tumbled. There is a bit of an alcohol problem, there is the loss of some of the strong, supporting ties of the past, and there are those areas which Chance designates as reflecting a quest for identity and the problem of identity-change. In the last-mentioned case, for example, some tension arises when many of the native residents of an area assume Western dress, when they adopt technological habits associated with Westernized and thus new types of work, or when language begins to change. All of these features, and more, combine to call forth in individuals the fundamental question of what precisely they are in face of the modern world.

Yet, as Chance so aptly indicates, this is not a reflection of an abject compliance, nor is it yet a renunciation. But the manner in which older patterns weave themselves into the contemporary scene is rather more interesting than the fact that Eskimos take on Euro-American ways and ostensibly fit into the notions of "progress" which characterize the Western ethos. If language is changing, it is still in language that identity with the past is maintained. To be sure, the school imposes a knowledge of English; but even so, the self-identification of the group as Eskimo—rather than as European—comes out in Chance's discussion of the mode of modern life. It is true that many of the older formal patterns of societal organization are gone. Yet there are still present those basic cultural orientations which have made the Eskimo race so proud. The continuing economic dependence on hunting means that the group maintains a sense of self-reliance. And out of this, too, comes the interesting and continuing balance between a fatalistic submission to nature and a sense which permits some degree of control over nature. The older religious institutions may be gone, but there yet remains a view of man and his place in nature which is clearly not derived from a Western ethic.

A point on which all observers of the Eskimo agree is that the Eskimo's culture places stress on individual freedom of choice. Here again, as Chance quotes from one of

his informants: "Nobody ever tells an Eskimo what to do." The suggestion is of the strength of native tradition. In the same quotation, it is noted that "some people are smarter than others and can give good advice; they are the leaders." This indicates that patterns of leadership are today, as they were in the past, essentially ephemeral, and that the continuing emphasis is on the integrity of the person. There is also the stress, reflective of the native pattern, on kinship relations and the kindred grouping—organizations which permitted an adequate adjustment to economic pressures in a hostile environment. Finally, the patterns of co-operation and competition continue to be expressed in aboriginal rather than in Westernized ways.

Thus, it is true that many of the formalized aspects of the older institutional life are gone. Shamanism, wife exchange, and the men's assembly house (*karigi*) have disappeared along with countless features of organization. Yet the basic orientation of the older culture remains, and it would be most incorrect to minimize the stirring sense of freedom that is achieved by magic or simply by self-assertiveness and socially-recognized worth. It is almost as though the system had not changed; overt elements have fallen by the way, but the covert features are still strongly present. As Chance concludes: "What is needed today is a program which will enable individuals at all levels of the community to participate in the development of their own resources." In other words, the culture is still adequate to meet the challenge of today.

In summary, Dr. Chance has succeeded in bringing together data which present a sympathetic and appropriate picture of the contemporary north Alaskan Eskimo. His is a work which may be read with profit not only by the arctic ethnographer, or indeed by the scientist whose work in the Arctic often causes him to lose sight of the human factor, but by anyone who is interested in the way of life of an intrepid people then and now.

Robert F. Spencer