

taining Canadian sovereignty in the North by paying 88.8 million dollars to the United States in 1944 and 1946 for its permanent installations along the highway. Richard Diubaldo describes the costly lesson caused to a large degree by Canada's neglect of the North during the years prior to 1939. Two other papers present an equally interesting, though conflicting, interpretation of the effects of the Alaska Highway on the Yukon Indians. Julie Cruikshank, an anthropologist, argues that the Highway has irreparably changed the native population. The relationship between the Indians and their land, and the relationship between Indians themselves through their traditional social organizations, have been damaged by the Highway. This change has led directly to the marginal position they occupy in the present Yukon economy and society. Kenneth Coates, an historian, argues that the Highway was merely one of many factors which have been responsible for the changes experienced by Yukon natives. He depicts the Indians as traditionally occupying a marginal role in the territorial economic and social order. The Highway, in his view, should not be blamed for the ills of the Yukon Indians and the argument that future construction projects should be modified or abandoned to protect the native society is based upon a misinterpretation of historical fact.

This book has interest for such a broad readership that it should be a success. Moreover, the range of topics and the variety of approaches taken make for an interesting study in itself. Finally, the collection offers insight into an undernourished area of Canadian studies — the North. As the editor notes in his preface, the volume is an introduction to the subject rather than the final word. His hope is that it will spawn further work on these and other related issues.

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**The Polar Shelf: The Saga of Canada's Arctic Scientists.** MICHAEL FOSTER and CAROL MARINO. Toronto: N C Press Limited, 1986. 128 p. ISBN 0-920053-63-7 \$24.95.

This book revives an age-old tradition in Canadian writing, the chronicle of Arctic adventure. In this particular instance, however, the story is not about the fabled explorers of the past, the intrepid Mounties of the Eastern Arctic Patrol, or the hardy traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Rather, *The Polar Shelf* honours the contributions of Canada's Arctic scientists. The book is deceptive in terms of its format, giving the appearance of yet another in the long series of ubiquitous "coffee-table" books packed with numerous photographs of frozen landscapes, muskox, and caribou, accompanied by an uninspiring text. Such is not the case. *The Polar Shelf* is cleverly designed to provide the reader with an enjoyable blend of history, science, and personal anecdotes supplied by present and former members of the Polar Continental Shelf Project (PCSP). The photographs of polar bears and muskox are but an added bonus for the reader.

For those readers unfamiliar with the organization and its aims — lamentably this is the case for most Canadians with respect to the world class achievements of our scientific community — the Polar Continental Shelf Project came into being in April 1958. The Technical Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development had recommended that a scientific research programme, "aim at hydrographic, oceanographic, geophysical and biological studies of the entire Canadian Polar Continental

Shelf and, if it is so desired later, the Canadian Arctic Basin.” (p. 15) A variety of factors coalesced to bring about the need for such a body. Sputnik’s success accelerated the United States space programme which required knowledge of the earth’s gravitational field, including the effects of the poles. The U.S. nuclear powered submarine *Nautilus* sailed under the Polar Ice Cap, thus demonstrating the strategic importance of the region. The potential economic benefits of northern resources, particularly Arctic oil reserves, took on greater value as a result of the 1958 declaration by the Law of the Sea Conference of a two hundred mile off shore limit. These technological advances, the growing threats to Canadian sovereignty, and the basic desire to increase our knowledge of the Arctic resulted in the creation of the Project.

*The Polar Shelf* was commissioned by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as part of the twenty-fifth anniversary tributes to the PCSP. Publication of this illustrated history appears twenty-eight years after the PCSP was formed and twenty-seven years since the first field party was sent north. While the book is far from a critical analysis of the organization, it does fulfil its purpose by educating Canadians about the valuable achievements of a group of dedicated public servants. The descriptions serve to emphasize the value of the Project, the innovative techniques developed by these people, and the major contributions they have made to the scientific knowledge we now have of the northern reaches of our country. These attributes far outweigh any lack of critical analysis displayed by the authors.

Given the recent Canadian experience, funding for government sponsored research projects can often be as fragile as the delicate Arctic ecosystem portrayed in this book. It is important, therefore, that the contributions of such projects be celebrated through works such as *The Polar Shelf*. The text makes a strong case for the continued scientific study of the Far North drawing on many diverse arguments to make the point. Our northern frontier has always been viewed metaphorically as a source of Canada’s strength, a storehouse of untapped potential, and a testing ground for our spirit of adventure and resourcefulness. The PCSP has served to bring that potential closer to reality, while at the same time its members continue to exhibit that sense of adventure and exploration which is slowly receding in the more settled regions of the country.

From its humble beginnings in 1958 the PCSP has grown from a few dozen staff members to a scientific field group of 235 supported by an additional 765 people. The small, interdisciplinary field parties composed of government and privately sponsored research scientists represent many different agencies and nations. They work in such varied disciplines as geomagnetism, seismology, oceanography, geology, botany, glaciology, archaeology, and hydrography. Beneficiaries of these studies have been the fields of navigation, oil exploration, mapping, as well as the many PhD and MA candidates who gained valuable experience by cooperating with members of other disciplines, organizations, and countries. Some of the recent projects include the 1979 LOREX mission which studied the submerged Lomonosov Ridge, the 1983 CESAR operation, a parallel study of the Alpha Ridge, and the most recent venture involving the use of an ice island as a floating laboratory. Collectively, these experiments and others have added to our understanding of the Arctic Ocean, its geological features, and climatic history. Lessons such as these serve to remind archivists that the history of a nation or a region is based on more than people, events, and politics.

Some readers may be wondering about the impartiality of this reviewer given the high praise showered on *The Polar Shelf*. It is necessary to confess a vested interest of sorts. As

archivist responsible for the records created by the PCSP and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the federal department through which it reports, this writer has had the opportunity to see at first hand the records generated by this agency. The range and quality of the work performed by the PCSP is certainly worthy of mention and it is surprising how few publications refer to the scientific achievements of the organization. The value of this book lies in its skillful blending of administrative history, individual vignettes in the form of oral history, particularly interesting photographs of the scientists in the field, along with the esthetically pleasing portraits of the Arctic landscape. One of the weaknesses of the book is that it is not long enough. More information could have been offered about recent administrative changes or about outside influences on programme development. These flaws aside, the book combines the beauty and danger of the Arctic with enough facts to satisfy those who seek to increase their knowledge. Even the nationalists can be heartened by the concrete efforts that at least one group is making to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty in the North.

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**The War Against the Seals: A History of the North American Seal Fishery.** BRITON COOPER BUSCH. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985. xviii, 374 p. illus. maps. ISBN 0-7735-0578-4 \$29.95.

The anti-sealing campaign of recent years has attracted more than its fair share of actresses and other charlatans. Briton Cooper Busch, an American professor of history with impressive credentials in British Imperial history, is neither of these. However, this book's selective use of sources calls into question the legitimacy of the anti-sealing campaign. Even though the sub-title is *A History of the North American Seal Fishery*, this study is not about the history of sealing in North American waters. Rather it only deals with sealing by the white citizens (with two notable exceptions) of the United States and British North America. This is most certainly a direct result of the author's use of a limited range of primary sources.

From the beginning one is disturbed by the very structure of the work. The book is divided into five parts. Part One: "Prologue," consists of one chapter, "Boston Men and Stonington Sealers 1783-1812," which deals with early American sealing. Part Two: "The Swilers of Newfoundland" discusses in two chapters sealing in Newfoundland from 1790 to 1916. Part Three: "The 'Sea Bears' of the Pribilofs" examines certain aspects of sealing in the Bering Sea from the American purchase of Alaska in 1867 down to 1911. The hunting of sea elephants and other lesser species is the subject of Part Four: "The Wilder Shores." Finally, in Part Five: "Epilogue," the author gives us an all too brief outline of the recent controversy. It should be noted here that the publisher has not provided adequate maps. They are much too small and do not improve the reader's geographical knowledge of such little known places as the Prince Edward Islands in the Indian Ocean or any of the other obscure sealing grounds mentioned in the book. More importantly the bibliography only lists published sources. The unpublished primary sources can only be found in the author's footnotes. This makes it very difficult to check the entire range of the author's sources.