

ECOLOGICAL SITES IN NORTHERN CANADA. EDITED BY D. N. NETTLESHIP AND P. A. SMITH. *Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the International Biological Programme, 1975. Available from Co-ordinator, IBP Committee, Panel 9, c/o Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa. 330 pages, illus. \$3.75.*

One great difficulty in safeguarding extensive areas of the Arctic landscape with its flora and fauna has always been the absence of a systematic inventory of biological resources. This understandable, but nevertheless regrettable, deficiency has in recent years resulted in bitter arguments between representatives of northern resource industries, who sometimes reason that their influence on ecosystems in the vast Arctic is surely minimal, and southern-based conservationists who in speaking so readily of the "fragility" of Arctic ecosystems often appear to object in principal to any development of the North. Both groups take advantage of the real ambivalence towards development on the part of native groups in Canada in order to bolster their arguments whenever it suits them. However, increasing demand for natural resources and the compromises inevitable between developers and conservationists will lead to gradual disappearance of the larger mammals and destruction of northern fish resources unless specific areas are set aside now to remain free in perpetuity from any development, or at least from certain kinds of development. The safeguarding of substantial representative samples of the Arctic landscape in their natural state could probably best be accomplished through the establishment of a number of large national parks, together with a substantial number of ecological reserves containing breeding and feeding areas important to particular species of birds and mammals. In the process, the restrictions necessarily imposed on the resource industries in their exploration and development of what will be still a small percentage of the Arctic landscape should serve not only to safeguard Canada's Arctic heritage for future generations but also to reduce public opposition to responsible development in the remaining areas.

The momentum gained in the institution of national parks in the Arctic appears to have been lost after the creation of the one on Baffin Island in 1972. At the same time, the establishment of ecological reserves has been retarded by the absence of a systematic inventory of the biological resources of the Arctic. With the publication of the present work by the Terrestrial Conservation Panel of the Canadian Committee for the International Biological Programme this need no

longer be the case. The Panel have listed seventy-one ecologically important sites which they believe should be seriously considered for protection, special management or study. The Panel included close to two dozen individuals — from government agencies, the resource industries and native groups — and received the support of other organizations, which are listed. The sites are first presented together on a map of the Arctic and subsequently considered on a regional basis. For each site there is a detailed map, followed by short descriptions of its physiography and biota, and complemented by a valuable bibliography. The sites include steep-cliffed islands with large sea-bird colonies, important caribou calving grounds and examples of desert landscape in the High Arctic. The editors, who have presented the material in a very readable fashion free of technical jargon, see the work as "an attempt to aid developers and development oriented agencies in their planning as well as a program for habitat preservation in Northern Canada".

With the publication of this book, and after the manifestly large amount of background work done by planners of Arctic parks within Parks Canada, the ball is more clearly than ever before in the hands of the federal government. Will the latter move vigorously to safeguard Canada's Arctic heritage for the benefit of all Canadians, or will it continue to deal in an ad hoc fashion with matters concerning the protection of the northern environment until most of the real reasons for the protection of it have disappeared? The members of the Terrestrial Conservation Panel and of their supporting groups and associations are to be complimented for making the inventory. It is now up to Canadians to urge their government to take appropriate action.

Jaap Kalf

THE LITTLE EMPEROR: GOVERNOR SIMPSON OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. BY JOHN S. GALBRAITH. *Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976. 232 pages, illus. \$16.95.*

Sir George Simpson, overseas governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1826 to 1860, was in both senses of the word a bastard. He was ashamed of his illegitimacy and, perhaps because of it, his vanity and arrogance earned him the epithet of this biography's title. In his time, Simpson must have been one of the best-hated men in North America. One sighs with relief to think that we shall not see his like again.

The stage on which Simpson occupied a