

the editor omits to include James Burney's "Chronological History" of northern voyages and Franklin's "Narrative" of his second journey which took him along the Alaskan north shore past a shallow indentation on the coast which he names Prudhoe Bay. And the reference in the introductory "Historical Reflections" to the massacres perpetrated by the natives of Siberia and North America on their European conquerors is by implication unjust to the persecuted aborigines of those regions as well as being at variance with the fashionable, and surely juster, judgement of modern history.

The editor, not by vocation a research historian but an international financier, has done his task with a thoroughness and breadth of knowledge which the professed scholar might envy. In addition he presents his material with a charm to which few scholars attain. It is a pity that a publication of this kind does not circulate widely. It could vastly augment popular interest in its theme.

L. H. Neatby

TRENDS IN THE POPULATION OF BARREN-GROUND CARIBOU OF MAINLAND CANADA OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES: A RE-EVALUATION OF THE EVIDENCE. BY G. R. PARKER. *Canadian Wildlife Service, Occasional Paper no. 10, Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971. 6½ x 9 inches, 11 pages.*

Those who have kept in touch with information available upon the changing fortunes of the population of barren-ground caribou in Arctic Canada east of the Mackenzie River and west of Hudson Bay will be aware that the low point in the population curve was reached in the winter of 1955-56 when the number approximated 200,000. Following "rumour data" in 1966 that a population explosion was in progress, the Canadian Wildlife Service undertook a thorough reassessment by aerial survey in 1967. The published data from this reached an estimate of 322,500

caribou which, with a subsequent adjustment, gave an official estimate of 385,500.

The purpose of the paper now reviewed is to compare the estimates of 1955 with those of 1967 in statistically equivalent terms. The result reveals that there is no basis whatever for concluding that an increase has taken place in the intervening twelve years. Indeed the population estimates are now shown to be identical when the same techniques are used to transfer the original field data into the corrected estimates of the two surveys twelve years apart.

This brief paper not only makes this vital comparison but in Table III it clearly shows the size of the adjustments to the raw data that had been imposed in arriving at final estimates. One seldom criticizes an author for brevity but, to me, the present paper would have been improved by slightly more interpretation of Table III. In view of the large size of the corrections to the original data it would have been helpful to have been able to make direct comparison of those data. The details given in Table III are presented in a way which makes this most difficult to do. I have attempted to extract these figures and I emerge with unrefined estimates of 257,000 for 1955 and 251,470 for 1967. Again the inference seems clear that there were no grounds for the suggestion that there had been a substantial population increase.

On the basis of the data presented it is unfortunate that the barren-ground caribou herd has been reopened to hunting and it is to be hoped that those responsible for the administration of the use made of this population will take the steps necessary to safeguard its integrity until such time as there is evidence of a reversal in trend.

This paper reveals the problems involved in manipulating animal numbers under circumstances where field census, carefully done by trained people, is as difficult as it is with an arctic caribou population. Figures acquire an unwarranted concreteness and, inasmuch as administrators depend upon such figures as the basis of action, grave strategic errors can occur.

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