

Reviews

THE NEW PEOPLE: THE ESKIMO'S JOURNEY INTO OUR TIME. By EDITH IGLAUER. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966. 5½ x 8½ inches. 205 pages. \$5.00.

The New People might have been another of the my-two-weeks-in-the-Arctic type of book except for three things. First, the author, a graduate of Wellesley and the Columbia School of Journalism, had a purpose for her trips, other than simply travelling and sight-seeing. Secondly, she gives a clearly written account of everyone she met and everything she saw; and thirdly, she has an interest in and affection for the Eskimos of the Canadian Eastern Arctic.

Mrs. Iglauer first became interested in the co-operative movement in northern Canada when she met Donald Snowdon, then chief of the Industrial Department of the Department of Northern Affairs, in New York a few months before her first trip.

In 1961 she accompanied Snowdon and Paul Godt, head of the Co-operative Development Section of the division, on their inspection tour of the Ungava co-operatives. They visited Fort Chimo; George River, where there was a saw-mill and logging operation, a char-freezing operation, and a vigorous handicraft industry; and Port Burnwell, with its seal- and char-freezing industries, and handicrafts.

In 1963 Mrs. Iglauer's second trip took her to Frobisher Bay where she attended, as observer, the First Conference of the Arctic Co-operatives.

Her third trip took her up the west coast of Hudson Bay to Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, and Eskimo Point. Again she was accompanying Mr. Snowdon, the purpose of whose trip this time was to check on the Eskimo response to locally canned seal and whale meats.

The fourth and last trip was to be again to Baffin Island, but weather forced the plane to land at Fort Chimo; so the author, on her own initiative, hired a plane and returned to George River, the first settlement she had visited, to see how it had fared and grown in the three years since she had been there.

The co-operative movement in northern Canada was a concept alien to Eskimo thinking and way of life. It demands living in settlements rather than leading nomadic lives, and working for one's neighbour, rather than for

one's self. And yet, slowly, the Eskimos have accepted this way of life, having seen how they and their communities have benefited by it. Mrs. Iglauer's book gives us an insight into the actual workings of these northern co-ops, and how they are run by their Eskimo owners. Though originally set up with the white man's help, they are now run by Eskimo councils — two still accept help from their local missionary or RCMP constable (keeping accounts in syllabics can be tricky), and one even has a white man on its hired staff.

Great attention is paid to the many council meetings Mrs. Iglauer attended, from the small local ones to the Conference in Frobisher Bay, and the author's journalistic training comes to the fore at these times. She has an eye for detail — whether verbal or visual — that makes the reader feel he is "really there." Her description of the types of food being experimentally prepared by Eric Hofman — such succulent items as muskrat pepperoni, pickled smoked muskrat, whale meat loaf, seal meat with onion sauce, seal heart sweet and sour, seal-liver pate, walrus meat in Spanish sauce, sealburger in tomato sauce, pickled whale flippers and walrus flippers vinaigrette — forced the reviewer to creep from her bed where she had been reading this book in the middle of the night and go to the kitchen to prepare a toasted peanut butter sandwich, the southern equivalent, perhaps, of the Eskimo favourite, canned muktuk.

The book is handsomely bound, and includes a map, showing the position of all the places visited by the author. Regrettably, there are no photographs of these settlements.

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THE NUNAMIUT ESKIMOS: HUNTERS OF CARIBOU. By NICHOLAS J. GUBSER, with a Foreword by GEORGE PETER MURDOCK. *New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965. (Distributed by McGill University Press in Canada.)* 6½ x 9½ inches. xv 384 pages, glossary, bibliography, index. \$8.50.

Among ethnological works on the Eskimo, this book ranks with the most significant on at least three counts. First, it deals with an inland group of Eskimo, the Nunamiut of the Brooks Range in Northern Alaska, who depend on caribou hunting in a harsh mountain environment for their survival. Most other

ethnographic studies of the Eskimo are concerned with groups living in a coastal rather than inland environment. For this reason alone, Gubser's book extends considerably the available knowledge on the problems of inland living of indigenous northern peoples.

Second, as a scholarly work in its own right, the book is of unusual quality. The author begins with a history of native Alaskan contact with Whites, based on documentary study. This is followed by ethnohistory of the Nunamiut based largely on field data. The next portion of the book is a remarkably insightful report of Nunamiut social organization, where household and community structure and activities are carefully depicted. A chapter on "The Individual" introduces a Lintonian perspective on status and socialization that rounds out the picture of social organization. Perhaps the most intrepid effort is an attempt to relate concepts and mental processes to social structure and natural environment, particularly the latter. While the entire book is descriptive, there are occasional expressions which are related to major concerns of social science theory, such as the Nunamiut notion of a "fractionally organic" universe and the relevance for societal survival of the Nunamiut cognitive processes of empiricism, supernaturalism, and anthropomorphism. The book as a whole is an important empirical contribution to any person interested in relating social organization, psychological processes and ecology or ecosystems.

The third reason for ranking this book as significant is its readability. As Murdock notes in the "Foreword," the writer produced the book while an undergraduate student at Yale University, following field work in Alaska. Probably for this reason the book has a rare directness, lucidity, and intimacy. Anecdotes, personal experiences in obtaining data, and the Eskimo words used in the text, as well as the careful attempt to explain Nunamiut thinking and describe their background, add up to a high level of communication with the reader. This process is aided by the thoughtful addition of appendices containing a map of northern Alaska, a description of the summer camp community studied, a calendar of seasonal activities, a glossary, and a bibliography.

While Gubser's book deserves a wide audience extending from senior high school students to the highest levels of government service or academia, attention should be called to what the book does not say too much about, the processes of acculturation and the continuing impact of Western culture on the Nunamiut. The author has emphasized indigenous Nunamiut society as it was and is, though his work repeatedly shows the impact of contacts

with the outside "White" world. Other studies will be needed to show the processes through which Nunamiut society changes and is being related not only to the Brooks Range environment but also larger environments of mankind.

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SNOW COVER. By P. G. POTTER. *Climatological Studies Number 3*, Toronto: Canada Department of Transport, Meteorological Branch, 1965. 8½ x 11 inches. 69 pages, mimeograph, 114 diagrams, 22 charts, tables. \$1.50.

Snow cover, the layer of snow at the ground surface, is of enormous importance for the economy of northern lands. The present volume, based mainly upon observations during twenty years since 1941/42, deals very thoroughly with the snow cover of Canada. (It should be noted that the snow cover of frozen water bodies, of great importance for their heat budget, is disregarded. The isolines of the charts cross Hudson Bay without deviation.)

Canada is divided into seven main divisions and the particular conditions of their snow cover are described with respect to start, duration, and end of the cover season and the depths of snow cover. Tables for 198 stations give the earliest, median, and latest dates for the first and last snow cover; the smallest, median, and greatest maximum of snow depth and the mean depth of snow cover at the end of each month. Diagrams show for 114 stations the frequencies of different depths of snow for the end of each month.

These data are also represented in 22 instructive charts of the Provinces and Territories of Canada. The longest snow cover, over 300 days from late August to early July, is to be found in northern Ellesmere Island; but the median depth of thickest cover does not exceed 8 to 16 inches. Southernmost British Columbia has normally, near sea level, hardly any snow cover; on the other hand, the mountains of southern British Columbia have the strongest snowfall and the deepest snow cover in Canada. Another region with deep snow cover and mean maximum depths of over 50 inches is north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in southern Labrador. The ground is here snow-covered for about half a year.

The volume contains a wealth of other useful and interesting information.

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