

Dr. C. Earl Albrecht, a Fellow of the Arctic Institute, has recently agreed to serve as Chairman of the Extension Committee (U.S.A.) of the Arctic Institute. This committee is charged with seeking financial support for the Institute in the United States, both by its own direct efforts as well as with the help of others associated with the Institute who are concerned to see its objectives more fully realized.

Dr. Albrecht has had a long and distinguished career in private and public medicine and has spent much of his time in Alaska. Following 7 years in private practice in Alaska beginning in 1935 and service with the U.S. Army during the World War II, he was Commissioner of Health for the Alaska

Department of Health from 1945 to 1956. He served as a Regent of the University of Alaska from 1949 to 1957. From 1958 to 1963 he was Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and now is Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia.

Volumes one and two of *Arctic*

The first two volumes of *Arctic*, 1948 and 1949, which have been long out of print, have now been reprinted by the Johnson Reprint Corporation, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 1003, U.S.A., from whom they can be obtained at \$15.00 per volume, paper bound.

Reviews

THE LEMMING YEAR. By WALTER MARSDEN. *London: Chatto and Windus.* 1964. 8¾ x 5¼ inches, 252 pages, 3 text figures, 3 maps, 16 plates, 2 tables. 30 sh.

Though Walter Marsden may well be right in describing his book as the only one devoted exclusively to an account of lemmings, the reader does not have to wait long before finding that it is very far from being the only published report about the enigmatic arctic rodents. He brings together many historical records, reminiscences, observations, accounts of investigations both important and inconclusive, facts garnered from a host of co-operators, and observations that he made personally in Norway and Sweden. Though written for the "intelligent general reader", it will be valued

by ecologists, whether familiar with lemmings or not. Writing such a compendium must be an onerous task, and it is impressive to find skillful and evocative descriptive passages here and there among the facts and speculations.

The book is in part an account of the natural history of lemmings, which belong to two circumpolar genera. Physiology, behaviour, diet, distribution, pelage, and other subjects are treated at some length. A large part of it is devoted to an examination of the problems posed by the fluctuation in numbers that are so obvious in these populations. As it happens, conclusions that are generally applicable are virtually absent in the mass of literature on lemming cycles, and the author, because

he gives similar emphasis to every apparently relevant fact and hypothesis, seems often merely to be stirring muddy waters.

"The lemming year" is not written for biologists, and there are understandably many statements in it that are not strictly accurate, or are misleading. Other shortcomings and errors are of more general concern. The maps, for example, presented as an aid to the understanding of distribution patterns, lack any indication of the boundaries of the ranges of the lemmings. If the varying lemming ranged no farther west in the U.S.S.R. than the Ob' River as stated, its distribution would be difficult to understand. In fact, it lives as far west as the White Sea, which pinches off its tundra habitat in the same way as Hudson Bay does towards the east at the other end of its range. The term "Labrador" is used for the Labrador-Quebec peninsula. "Red" arctic poppies and "purple" dryas are said to make "glorious patches of colour" in the North American Arctic. A still picture from Walt Disney's movie "White Wilderness" shows varying lemmings, not brown lemmings.

"The lemming year" is a useful book, but not an authoritative one. It is hoped that it will encourage residents of lemming country to accumulate information on the remarkable phenomena that accompany the population processes of these interesting little creatures.

A. H. MACPHERSON

THE FRIENDLY MONTAGNAIS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS IN THE UNGAVA PENINSULA. By FRANCIS HARPER. *Lawrence: University of Kansas.* 1964. 9 x 6 inches, 120 pages, 20 plates. \$2.00.

This volume deals with the Montagnais-Naskapi Indians, inhabitants of the Labrador Peninsula. It is based on a summer spent in the southeastern part of the Peninsula in the area of Knob

Lake and Seven Islands, and on the literature, which Harper has gone through to extract information about the Montagnais-Naskapi. He was conducting biological investigations but became interested in the Indians.

The work is divided into several sections. First he tries to make a distinction between Montagnais, Naskapi, and Cree. Following this, he discusses the distribution of the various groups within the Peninsula. Having set the stage, he presents data regarding the various branches of the Algonkian family that are located in the Labrador Peninsula; first the "Cree", then the "Naskapi," then what he terms the "Montagnais-Naskapi", and finally the "Montagnais" themselves. Next Harper discusses some of the "Montagnais" he met while doing field work. After this comes a list of Indian names for the mammals, birds, and fish encountered in the area. There is then a note on the Indian hunting dogs of the Montagnais-Naskapi, and consideration is also given to the Indian dances and canoes. The concluding section is devoted to brief biographical sketches of various ethnologists and others who have dealt with the Indians of the Labrador Peninsula.

The book is of extremely limited value. Great use is made of quotations to portray the Montagnais-Naskapi and in so doing Harper reveals his ethnological *naïveté*. There is no evaluation. For instance, on page 23 and again on page 56, he uses information stating that the Nichicun band has dissolved, having emigrated to Seven Islands. Some may have done so, but the majority still exist and reside during the summer at Lake Mistassini. Furthermore, he is obviously confused over the term "band" and its relation to the trading post. This is indicated on page 59 where he discusses the "Petitsikapau band" as defined by Speck. Since a person from this band trades at Seven Islands, the centre for another band, Harper wonders if this Indian should not be considered a member of the latter band also. One question is the story that he relates of an Indian carrying seven 100-lb. bags of flour up a flight of stairs as an actual