

REVIEWS

PAGEANT OF THE NORTH.

A photographic adventure in Canada's north. Edited by CLIFFORD WILSON. *The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1957.* 11¼ x 8¼ inches; 176 pages. \$5.50.

About ten years ago an attractive and popular book of photographs reproduced from *The Beaver* was published. It provided in convenient form a generous selection from the many hundreds of technically outstanding and beautiful illustrations for which the Hudson's Bay Company magazine is famous.

The present volume contains about 175 black and white full-page photographs also reproduced from *The Beaver*, about half of them having been taken since the earlier volume was published. Clifford Wilson has arranged the photographs into a dozen groups and has provided a brief introduction for them. Representative titles of these "chapters" are "Indians", "Birds and Beasts", "Ships and Boats", "Eskimos", "The Newcomers".

The work of more than fifty photographers is represented — which itself emphasizes how much *The Beaver* has done and continues to do to encourage high quality photography in the frontier regions of Canada. While many of the pages show the work of professionals whose reputations were already established elsewhere — Margaret Bourke-White of *Life* is notable among them — there are also many amateur photographs which are in no way inferior, among them the work of well-known northern travellers such as L. A. Learmonth, J. H. Webster and A. W. Banfield.

Photographs which have stood the test of the years and which seem likely to hold a permanent place as northern

documentaries include Brigdens' "Plains Indian in native dress", F. Dalman's "Manitoba Trapper", Bob Stewart's pictures of Eskimos made a generation ago, R. N. Hourde's "portraits" of the venerable "Distributor" and the extraordinarily moving studies of water birds by the late Lorene Squire, to whom the book is fittingly dedicated.

The reviewer was glad to see A. L. Learmonth's "Northwest Passage, Bellot Strait" once more, if only as a timely reminder that this route between west and east was familiar to traders long before its much publicized transit by naval vessels in the 1957 summer.

Pageant of the North is a useful book to keep on hand for occasional study and reference (even though the reviewer failed to locate among its many wildlife views a representative shot of "an arctic seal" called for urgently by an enquiring sculptress). The book is also very suitable to send as a gift to friends at home or overseas, particularly those who merit something characteristically Canadian.

Long may the happy teamwork of the Hudson's Bay Company, Clifford Wilson, Brigdens Ltd. (who made the engravings), the printers and publishers continue to give us such splendid, balanced and wide ranging views of the northland.

TREVOR LLOYD

DAWN IN ARCTIC ALASKA.

By DIAMOND JENNESS. *Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957.* 5½ x 8¾ inches; 222 pages; numerous illustrations by GIACOMO RAIMONDI; 6 sketch maps. \$5.50 in Canada.

The "dawn" of this title refers to a period of new contact with people and

things of the world outside the Arctic and the beginning of acculturation among Eskimos of the Beaufort Sea coast. The book presents a year, the first one, in Dr. Jenness's work among Eskimos. The year was 1913-14; the occasion, the Stefansson Arctic (or Stefansson-Anderson) Expedition.

Because of separation from their ship, several members of the expedition, including the author, had a lean and difficult winter. But probably Dr. Jenness learned more and gives us more of the daily life of his Eskimo hosts as a result of his great dependence on them. Dreary, small, and monotonous as it is, still the winter story of hunger and confinement is the real contribution of the book, since it gives the "feel" of the trappers' life without glamour or drama. This is realism without even a capital "R".

The summer story (1914) has another value: an account of the author's archaeological work, especially on Barter Island. This has biographical interest for his numerous friends, for young archaeologists learning the history of their field, and for inhabitants of the area. Those today manning the northern bases and radar sites probably find it hard to imagine the life of the area or the appearance of old sites before they came along.

The book contains little ethnography in detailed descriptions of techniques and beliefs. It does have, however, a good picture of the patterns of mobility forty years ago, both coastwise and between inland and coast. If one wanted a base from which to start an acculturation account of the area, this book would provide several good building blocks.

Life did not change so completely or so fast, though, as the author suggests. His assumption and misinformation regarding changes, evidently given him by others after he ceased work in Alaska, have led to the principal errors of the book. The reviewer had the interesting experience of visiting the book's area while reading it. On the basis of visits to Wainwright, Barrow and Barter Island, September 1957, we can reassure everyone that the people of Point Hope, Wainwright, and Barrow have continued whaling right to 1957, contrary to the

statement (page 127) that "whaling remains a mere memory." On information from Fr. Thomas Cunningham, S.J., who has lived in recent years on Diomed Island and has been on the Soviet side of Bering Strait since 1926, it can be said also that visiting and trade between Siberia and Alaska did not cease in that year, as stated (page 157). Trade between Eskimos on the two sides of the Strait continued until 1948.

These are of course only two errors in a book that otherwise seems accurate. Certainly its calm style is reassuring. It consistently eschews the dramatics and self-praise of so many northern journals. Although this is not a very exciting story, we are glad that Dr. Jenness after so many years has told it and especially glad that the winter described here did not discourage him from continuing in what turned out to be an important career in arctic archaeology.

MARGARET LANTIS

BIRTHPLACE OF THE WINDS.

By TED BANK II. *New York: Thomas Y. Crowell 1957. 274 pages; illus., plates, maps, diagrams. \$4.50.*

As the dust cover informs us, this book is "an informal account of scientific exploration among the islands of the Bering Sea". As the book itself presents it, Mr. Bank's "scientific exploration" is a continuous series of excitement and disappointment, thrill, romance, mystery, and heroism, recounted in the old stereotyped patterns of the travelogue to remote places produced *pour épater le bourgeois*. The "scientific" in Mr. Bank's "exploration" appears to consist in rummaging ghostly burial places cursed by the ancient beliefs of the Aleuts, scaling dangerous volcanos, and plucking an assortment of odd plants along with oddments of esoteric information of all descriptions. These activities are illustrated with sketches of mummies, photos of skulls, plants, rugged scenery, and people, drawings of queer, unexplainable bone, stone, and wooden objects. Human interest is added by the succession of hairbreadth escapes and daring adventures with nature, by the perennial assistant exploding 'Godamighty' at every new