

The book is well illustrated. Among the pictures is a splendid comic strip-type set of sketches of whaling in Spitsbergen by William Baffin and Robert Fotherby, his mate.

There is an idiosyncratic but useful bibliography. One omission, however, ought to be rectified. Nobody seriously interested in the Vikings' transatlantic voyages can do without G. M. Gathorne-Hardy's *The Norse discoverers of America*, the classic recension of the Saga texts.

The polar voyagers is the first of two volumes. The second volume will turn to the 19th century and the seekers after the North Pole.

A CHANGING CULTURE

[Review by Ian Whitaker* of Tim Ingold's *The Skolt Lapps today*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 276 pp, illus. £7.]

Dr Tim Ingold has written a book of considerable importance to the student of Arctic peoples. Based on a year and a half of field work between 1971 and 1974 among the so-called 'Skolt Lapps' of Sevettijärvi in the north-eastern corner of Finland, this is the fourth study in a series of anthropological monographs based on that particular ethnic group. The sequence started with the work of the human geographer Väinö Tanner (*Fennia*, Vol 49, 1929), and was continued by the ethnographic study of the same people in their original village of Suenjel by Karl Nickul (*Acta Lapponica*, Vol 5, 1948), and later by a study in the 'culture and personality' tradition by Pertti Peltö (*Kansatieteellinen Arkisto*, Vol 16, 1962). Although the Skolt Lapps therefore share with the Hopi the dubious privilege of being one of the most anthropologised groups in the world, it should be noted that Dr Ingold's predecessors held different intellectual allegiances. Ingold's work is firmly grounded in the 'British' structural functionalist tradition, or one of its offshoots, a perspective shared in Lappish studies particularly by the work of Robert Paine (Norway), the American Robert Pehrson, and the present writer (Sweden), but so far not intensively pursued by a student of one of the groups of Finnish Lapps. Ingold rather deviates from this tradition, however, by applying historical perspective to an understanding of some of the problems of the Skolts, as well as by using the concepts of brokerage developed by Barth and Paine.

A brief introductory chapter gives the vital facts connected with the Skolts' evacuation from their original territory as a result of changed international boundaries at the conclusion of World War II, a matter rather summarily dealt with. The main body of the book takes up three separate yet interconnected areas of enquiry: the present economy, the social structure of the Skolt community, and Skolt relations with the outside world.

The discussion of present-day reindeer husbandry is excellent. The transition from an earlier pattern of 'intensive' herding, whereby individual owners kept in fairly close contact with their own herds, to a more 'extensive' form, characterized by minimal contact between the owner and his animals and by the use of the snowmobile during the greater part of the year, is well brought out. The present situation has given rise to what Ingold calls 'predatory pastoralism', many an individual having so little contact with his own animals that a rational policy for exploiting his holding cannot be developed; instead he has to resort to 'hunting' an animal in a style reminiscent of an earlier period. Calf-marking has become much more difficult, and large numbers of unmarked offspring find their way into the common stock of the local association of reindeer breeders (*paliskunta*) or, perhaps, are acquired by individuals illegally.

The changing pattern of reindeer husbandry has resulted in numbers of formerly successful breeders having to abandon their livelihood and take up other occupations. The opportunities for such alternative employment, as well as for the exploitation of subsidiary natural resources, especially fishing, are well described.

In the section devoted to the social relations between members and groups within the community, Ingold shows some of the problems that have arisen as a result of the original allocation of residences and of restrictions placed on the acquisition of fresh residential sites by members of families which may be splitting up, due to marriage of the younger members, or for other reasons. The temporary 'ossification' of the residential pattern determined at the time of resettlement, not, it

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should be noted, by the Skolts themselves, has given rise to a number of problems; due to the lifting of restrictions after Ingold's field work was completed, these problems may now be somewhat alleviated. In this section there is also abundant material on the allocation of resources within the nuclear family and the problems associated with the acquisition of snowmobiles. These machines are essentially seen as a means of projecting their own personalities by the young, who chiefly use them, but are given a more precise economic role by the older members of the family, who chiefly finance their purchase. The division of the Severtijärvi region into smaller neighbourhoods, and even to clusters of households, is also discussed.

In the final section, devoted to the relations of the Skolt 'minority' with a larger society, we are given a particularly detailed description of the career of the 'headman', and of his alleged manipulation of ethnicity in the pursuit of his personal advantage. The way in which non-Skolt spouses have adopted the cause of Skolt ethnicity is also subjected to a penetrating analysis. Ingold pinpoints some of the illogicalities that have emerged as the result of 'leap-frog' politics, in which local problems have not been resolved at the level of discussion within the commune, but instead have been made the subject of appeals to higher-level authority, whose decisions have not always been consistent.

With the exception of the last chapter, the work is not burdened with an obtrusive theoretical apparatus which would deter the non-specialist reader. One serious flaw must, however, be mentioned: the detailed discussion of inter-familial rivalries in chapter 16. The data relate to a neighbourhood given a fictional name, but easily identifiable from material previously presented. Negative judgements are made about the behaviour of individuals clearly recognizable within the community. While the discussion is maintained at a serious academic level, it may not always be seen to be so locally, and publication of the material, in a form which will certainly circulate within the community, possibly as translated 'highlights', renders a serious disservice to any anthropologist who might wish to complete a fifth study in the 'series'. The inclusion of such material is less comprehensible since Ingold accuses one of his predecessors, Professor Pelto, of 'an anecdotal and irresponsible use of data' (p 11). Ingold should have presented the material, if at all, in an article where the location would not be so easily identified. Not to have done so may well jeopardize the chances of other anthropologists being granted access to work among the Skolt Lapps.

IN BRIEF

ICEBERGS IN THE DESERT?

Four years ago, in *Polar Record* No 104, 1973, W. F. Weeks and W. J. Campbell outlined an apparently feasible scheme for towing Antarctic icebergs northwards to supplement the water supply in arid areas of Australia and Chile. Well, if that idea astonished you (as it did Weeks and Campbell to begin with), what about the notion of towing Antarctic icebergs across the equator to Saudi Arabia? That, too, is feasible according to the French engineering consulting firm Cicero, which has already worked out a tentative plan to tow an iceberg of 85 million tonnes over 8 000 km through the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea. They consider that the scheme could halve the price of water for drinking and irrigation in Saudi Arabia. The study was commissioned by the Saudi director of water projects, Prince Mohammed al Feisal.

The first stage of the plan is to select an iceberg from satellite photographs and to check it with sonar equipment to locate possible faults. If the iceberg is suitable, it is then cut into a good shape for towing, with a pointed bow, by the use of steel hawsers which are let into the ice by heated weights. To prevent melting by contact with the warm sea, the bottom of the iceberg is covered with a huge plastic sheet, and melted water collecting inside the sheet helps to provide insulation. Further insulation is provided by encircling the iceberg with a giant plastic 'skirt' fixed above the water. It is estimated that only 20 per cent of the iceberg's mass would be lost through evaporation and melting during the journey.