

important enough on its own to affect the sign of the budget. The related problem of antarctic temperature fluctuations is discussed at the end of Chapter 6. Mean annual temperatures at Orcadas, the only meteorological station south of 60° S with a long record of observations, fell between 1908–30, rose between 1931–56, then again fell slightly to 1981. As Schwerdtfeger comments, such variations do not support the popular hypothesis that increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is leading to warming, though his data on the mean temperatures of early and recent decades show some indications of slight warming.

The list of references at the end is extensive, and about 50 per cent of journal articles quoted are less than ten years old. Tabulated data are also extensive and will form a valuable reference source for future workers. Nevertheless, the work is much more than just a collection of climatological statistics, because it gives a very good picture of the weather in the Antarctic. In particular the great difficulties in collecting meteorological data are made very clear. Examples and anecdotes throughout the text make this a most readable book and a mine of information. Professor Schwerdtfeger is to be congratulated on producing such a useful and important collection of information. He has succeeded admirably in his aim, and his book should be in every library of Antarctic literature. (J. G. Lockwood, School of Geography, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ALASKA

ALASKA'S URBAN AND RURAL GOVERNMENTS. Morehouse, T. A., McBeath G. A. and Leask, L. 1984. Lanham, University Press of America. 261p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0 8191 3771-5. \$11.25.

If one is interested in local government and its application to Arctic and sub-Arctic territory, one might expect Alaska to provide the most instructive and sophisticated example. A new state, created in 1959, could surely experiment with new forms of government devised to fit the unusual situation. One's expectation would be justified, and this excellent book by three University of Alaska researchers lays it all out with exemplary clarity. They emphasise the features of the system which are specially Alaskan (rather than make a comparison with the rest of the USA), and this suits the non-American reader too. The biggest unit of Alaskan local government is the borough (pronounced burrow), which would be called county in most other parts of the United States, and there is an interesting concept of the 'unorganised borough' for the very large areas not incorporated. Special attention is given to the remarkable North Slope Borough, 88 000 square miles along the Arctic coast, where revenues from the Prudhoe Bay oilfield allowed a borough budget in 1983 of \$185 million to service the 4 500 inhabitants, principally Eskimo. This is the sort of local government it must be exciting to operate—but what if, or rather: when, the oil runs out? As it is, they calculate in Alaska that a drop of \$1 a barrel in world oil prices costs Alaska \$150 million in tax revenue. The book is full of useful and relevant information, derived not only from published sources (which are very numerous), but from interviews with many of the people concerned. Can any of the ideas be applied elsewhere? Probably, but it would clearly help if elsewhere contained a major oilfield. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)