

Scandinavia provided most of the speakers at the colloquy, with contributions on library resources and services, bibliographic projects, and cooperative ventures among libraries in the Scandinavian countries. Several papers of more general interest were also presented, including introductions to the work of the Nordic Sámi Institute at Kautokeino, the Eiscat (European Incoherent Scatter project) installation near Tromsø, and the University of Tromsø's Arctic biological research station. One day was set aside for contributions from North American and British libraries. It is intended that the proceedings of the colloquy will be published, and it was also reported that the revised edition of the directory *Polar and cold regions library resources* will shortly be ready for publication.

The next colloquy will be held in 1984 at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, at the invitation of the Ocean Engineering Information Centre, Centre for Cold Ocean Resources Engineering.

Review

HISTORY OF MODERN WHALING

[Review by Gordon Jackson* of *The history of modern whaling* by J. N. Tønnessen and A. O. Johnsen, translated by R. I. Christophersen. London, C. Hurst; Canberra, Australian National University, 1982, xx, 798 p, illus. £19.50.]

It is now 12 years since the publication of the last four volumes of *Den moderne hvalfangsts historie* (1959–70). Hailed as the standard work when produced under the auspices of the Norwegian Whaling Association, it reminded us forcibly that modern whaling owed its origin to the enterprise, initiative, and exclusive patriotism of a tiny nation whose language most of us, regrettably, cannot read. This translation has long been awaited, and what a superb translation it is. Apart from one or two obscure sentences and an irritating over-use of the rebuffed alien word *matériel*, it is a pleasure to read.

The original edition ran to 2 700 pages and a monumental effort has obviously gone into boiling it down to the present 798 pages. Unfortunately there is no detailed indication of what has been left out, beyond 'everything that is of local or personal interest only to the Norwegian reader'. We are left wondering how far this is the belly blubber, and how far valuable information might still be extracted from the body of the work! Moreover, the value to other scholars of this immense work of scholarship is greatly diminished by the omission of source references and notes. The comment that 'the interested reader will find references in the corresponding chapter of the Norwegian version' is just silly: if we could do that we would not need an English edition.

Despite the loss of 2 000 pages, the work is remarkably informative and comprehensive. No whaling ground is overlooked, no period omitted, no company ignored. The characteristics of the various whales are revealed. Changes in catching and processing techniques are analysed and illustrated. Whaling vessels of every sort are described, and the whaling factories identified by name and owner. There is no doubt that this book is, and will remain, the most valuable source of detailed information about modern whaling, with easy access provided by indexes of persons, vessels, companies, places and subjects. The story is supported by an array of valuable statistical information and by equally instructive illustrations, though the quality of reproduction leaves much to be desired.

The first part of the book established Norway's position in the trade, with a judicious account of the emergence of modern whaling using the techniques evolved by Svend Foyn off the coast of Finnmark. But almost the first thing we learn is that modern whaling methods are so good that any particular whaling station or area has only a limited life. The second part of the book therefore follows the Norwegians as they took their new catchers, guns, tackle and explosive harpoons across to Iceland, Faroes, Shetland, Spitsbergen and Newfoundland. And when nothing was left there but piles of bones, we follow the whalers down to South America, Africa, Australasia and, above all, the British South Atlantic islands. It is a truly remarkable story of technical and entrepreneurial skills opening up bay whaling stations wherever whales were to be had.

* Department of History, University of Strathclyde, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XQ.

The third part of the book moves away from the fished-out bay stations to the pelagic stage of whaling before and after World War II. More than half the book is devoted to the great expansion of the industry following the introduction of the floating factory, the marketing problems of the inter-war depression, the scramble for oil on the eve of World War II, and the even greater scramble for oil in the years of shortages following the war. The rough geographical divisions of the book are interspersed with admirable general chapters analysing the development of whaling as a whole in various self-contained periods, outlining the causes of bursts of activity, with due consideration of market opportunities that encouraged growth and technical advances which made it possible. Above all, especially towards the end, was the spectre of suicidal over-fishing. Whaling was a fight for profits in a world of fluctuating markets and unpredictable catches, and considerable attention is paid to the largely futile attempts of various bodies to control whaling, and to those who ignored the regulations.

It is impossible to do justice to the contents of such a large book in a review of this length. For the sheer volume of information contained in its 36 chapters it deserves the highest praise. If anything there is too much information, and the wood is sometimes obscured by the trees. With so many diverse chapters there is inevitably a certain amount of overlap and repetition, together with some chronological confusion which is not helped by incorrect page headers to two chapters (one reads of the quota conflict 1934–38 on a page headed 1927–31 in a chapter headed 1930–4!). The earlier chapters would have been clearer and more useful had potted histories of individual companies been subsumed in an over-all survey of the development of the business of whaling.

Here, in fact, lies the greatest weakness of the present edition. There is far too much diplomatic history and not enough business history. The endless negotiations of international bodies failed to save the whale and are rather tedious. The whaling firms were far more successful in their attempts to catch the whales. Or were they? There are plenty of references to millionaires, but very little on the long-term profitability of whaling. We still do not know how the business side actually worked. How were companies organized and financed? Was easy credit to blame for over-fishing? A greater examination of labour, and particularly of the Norwegian stranglehold on board foreign whaling factories, would have been good. It is not all that clear how or why Norway dominated the industry, when they used so little of the oil. The general problem of the marketing of oil would have benefited from close examination. (The omission of the oil broker David Geddes from the index is even more surprising than the omission of Rupert Troughton, the British whaling entrepreneur.)

When one is offered so much it is, perhaps, ungrateful to ask for more. Within its prescribed limits this work is magnificent. If there is still room for a survey of the economic or business history of whaling, much of it could be got by boiling down the present work, and we shall remain grateful to Johnsen who began it, Tønnessen who wrote most of it and abridged it, and R. I. Christophersen who translated it.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND POLITICS OF ANTARCTICA

[Review by David Lloyd Jones* of F. M. Auburn's *Antarctic law and politics*. London, C. Hurst; Canberra, Croom-Helm, 1982, xx, 364 p. £17.50.]

Professor Auburn's work on the law and politics of Antarctica appears at a critical moment in the history of that continent. As he points out in his preface, Antarctic politics up to 1973 must be viewed against the comparatively static terms of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959. Article IV of the Treaty, which imposes a moratorium on claims to territorial sovereignty, conceals an inability of the participating states to resolve the question of sovereignty over Antarctica. In the same way delegates in 1959 were well aware that mineral resources might be discovered in Antarctica and of the possible eventual need to regulate their exploitation, but refrained from raising the issue simply because if it had been pursued there would have been no treaty at all. In a sense, these omissions were a part of the price paid for the measure of international agreement embodied in the Treaty. Professor Auburn argues that the Treaty has been adequate as a temporary measure, principally because the absence of an indigenous population and the absence hitherto of readily exploitable natural resources has largely relieved

* Downing College, Cambridge CB2 1DQ.