

**R. M. Bone. *The Geography of the Canadian North – Issues and Challenges*. Oxford University Press, Don Mills, Ontario, 2nd edition, 2003, 248 pages.**

As diligent readers of R.M.Bone's *Regional Geography of Canada* we were eager to welcome the second edition of *The Geography of the Canadian North*. Both these books are used in our course of *Geography of Canada* (Z8011) at the Institute of Geography, Faculty of Science, Masaryk University in Brno.

Our personal experience with the Canadian North is not too different from the general Canadian experience. We have flown above the Canadian North (the Labrador Peninsula, Athabaska Lake etc.) several times; we have also traveled by Greyhound from Vancouver to Whitehorse with a trip to St. Elias Mountains, and back to Edmonton and Saskatoon.

Among the priorities of this book is, among other things, a balance of proportions between the chapters: northern perceptions (15 pages), the physical base (27), the historical background (34), population geography (22), resource development (31), megaprojects (24), environmental impacts of resource projects (26), aboriginal economy and society (26), looking to the future (12).

This book covers many geographical aspects of the Canadian North, presenting it as a resource frontier of the hinterland/periphery. It begins with physical geographical topics, such as climatic conditions of the Arctic and Subarctic area, permafrost, global warming issues, ocean and seawaters, landforms etc., continuing with human geographical topics, e.g. Aboriginal homeland and affairs, employment incentives, question of taxes, resource and service economies, political issues, etc. This book concisely covers all branches of regional geography, connecting various geographies; there is a balanced approach to describing the region: economic, social, regional, ecological, technical, political, and cultural, future and past. This interconnectivity is not only within individual chapters but is also present within the book itself. Simply said, the style is the same as in the *Regional Geography of Canada*, i.e. a well balanced textbook based on social construction.

Bone includes also a chapter on history of the North starting some 30,000 years ago, continuing through the period of Canada's political control over the region, Cold War era and ending with the up-to-date topics, such as the new territory of Nunavut and megaprojects. Megaprojects are critical issues of the current North not only from the environmental point of view but also from the others: on one hand they bring new business and employment opportunities but on the other there is an inevitable impact on the (social) environment, not forgetting the Aboriginal issues once again, and important questions such as sustainability, resource boom-and-bust cycles, anthropogenic damage to Nature, etc.

There might be a discourse on the following aspects of the book:

- The terms of "subarctic" and "boreal" – we, as Europeans, differentiate between subarctic and boreal in the climatological/vegetational sense. For us,

subarctic means tundra and wooded tundra while boreal is strictly defined as forests.

- “Aboriginal culture must play a role in this new economy.” (p.217) – what role does multiculturalism, otherness, juxtaposition, etc. play? Is it just a clash or can it be sustainable? Should the Inuit not be multilayer personalities?
- We fully appreciate Bone’s looking into future with questions, directions, etc. but is it not the time to open the locality debate concerning the North?

*The Canadian North* is a (text)book suitable not just for scholars and university students, but also for wide public who do not have to possess any previous knowledge of the region. It includes a number of tables, graphs, maps, glossary, and most importantly, as we believe, the vignettes, which put attention on some specific and interesting topics, such as “polynyas”- water “hot spots” in the Arctic ocean. The topics of the vignettes may be developed in essays and papers and thus bring the students to individual and more detailed work/research.

*The Canadian North* is the most comprehensive geographical (text)book on this region with potential wide acceptance by other disciplines. The remarkable fact about this book is that it is opening a new mode of regional geography of the world. It analyzes regions in the world with similar characteristics such as Amazonia, Siberia, Sahara, Tibet, etc., which we can consider a geography of sparsely populated areas that prevail in the world, not only on land, but also in oceans (represented by islands as oases). The geography of these regions is similar; they have the same context, destiny, and maybe future. It is not just this feature that makes this book a unique, readable textbook on the Canadian North that everyone interested in/dealing with this area should read. It is an exciting to read, comprehensive and up-to-date textbook, a valuable sequel to *Regional Geography of Canada*, in short a book really worth reading.

We, as Czech geographers, can only congratulate Canadian geography for this excellent book.

**A.Hynek, L.Gabrielová, P.Sedláček**  
**Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic**