

BOOK REVIEWS

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. By Marshall Laird. 1980. Academic Press Inc. (London) Ltd. lxxi + 376 pp. \$57.50.

Growing up in the comparative wilderness of Western Canada, free from distractions confronting today's youth, I was struck first with amusement—then by wonder and fascination—upon discovering a strange narrative on the natural history of a cubic foot of tundra (author and exact title long ago forgotten). While such a piece of scientific work might today be a candidate in some circles for a "Golden Fleece Award," it left a lifetime impression on me, along with a profound and unflinching respect for highly motivated, well disciplined bibliographers in general, and natural historians in particular. Perhaps owing in part to this wistful yearning, although professing no special qualifications for the assignment, I welcomed the opportunity to read Marshall Laird's book and to share any resulting impressions.

Dr. Laird first joined the faculty at McGill University, thereby becoming a Canadian, in 1957, having been born in Wellington and educated (PhD, ScD : Zoology = parasitology/medical entomology) at the University of New Zealand. He is undoubtedly best known to most vector control workers for his years with the World Health Organization where he served with distinction in various capacities, including Chief, Environmental Biology, Geneva (1961-67). Since 1967 he has been professor of biology and department head (1967-72), currently Research Professor of Biology and Director of the Research Unit of Vector Pathology, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

"Natural history is the study of a single thing, nature. Whether it is normally a science or an art is a matter of debate, but there is no doubt about its tremendous scope: all living and nonliving things, their activities, and interrelationships. For practical purposes, the things and their activities are often separated into individual studies, field geology for the nonliving and field biology for the living. In addition, the interrelationships constitute the field of ecology. However, these separate studies have a serious drawback—like an organism, nature as a whole is much more than the sum of its parts."—R. A. Pimentel, *Natural History*, New York, Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1963.

Soon after joining the faculty at St. John's Dr. Laird began to organize and assimilate material that would, over the next decade, with the acknowledged help of many professional associates, develop into an extraordinary and comprehensive bibliography. Undertakings of this kind by their very nature are always incomplete. This one is no exception; in fact, a first supplement is already proposed to account for significant early papers that were overlooked.

It is probably safe to predict that specialists in some subject areas may feel that their field of interest has received less emphasis than warranted, and there may be those who will interpret the extensive entomological references, especially those on mosquitoes and blackflies, to be a clue to the author's professional idiosyncrasies. In the judgment of this reviewer who, for reasons not calling for explanation here, was interested—among other things—in Beothuk ethnology, the degree of balance among the many potential subjects was exceptional. Many of the earlier and more obscure titles containing significant biological information are extensively annotated. The 60 page introductory essay is skillfully developed and reads in an infectious manner, suggesting that the author thoroughly enjoyed the many extensive investigations demanded of the subjects.

For those with such diverse interests as a cultural affinity for an area acknowledged to be the cradle of European civilization in North America (ca. 1000 A.D.), or the history of the Newfoundland dog, or whimsical early accounts of "mermaid" (sirenian spp. ?) sightings around the Province, this may well prove to be the definitive reference. Certainly for generations to come every biologist planning scientific work, or highly recommended pleasure travel within Newfoundland, will first want to read Marshall Laird's enlightening introduction to his fascinating land.—John R. Walker, Bend, OR.

THE GARKI PROJECT, by L. Molineaux and G. Gramiccia. World Health Organization, Geneva, 1980. 311 pp. Swiss Francs 33 (about \$US 17).

This soft-bound volume provides a detailed and comprehensive report of work done during 1969-1976 on the epidemiology and control of malaria in the Garki District of Kano