

Affairs Branch (IAB), its inhabitants quickly and successfully geared their economy to agriculture. Later, agricultural expansion was curtailed by the IAB for reasons Lithman does not explore, and farming and livestock raising were abandoned during World War II and the immediate postwar years. This was followed by a period of seasonal wage labour, but the progressive mechanization of agriculture and forestry left most reserve job-seekers unemployed for long periods of time, and the community lagged seriously behind the surrounding non-native settlements.

The most recent period of Fort Alexander's history is the local government period, which began in the late 1960s with the initiation of a number of vocational programs and a massive influx of federal funds. Gradually, the administration of these programs and funds came under the control of the Chief and Band Council. It is in the analysis of local politics in this setting that Lithman's work finds its own ground. Transfer payments are regarded as a right, ". . . as compensations for the injustices which have befallen, and befall, all Indians" (p. 161). However, the distribution of these payments is subject to considerations other than those of need. Local politics is the fluid area of "bunches" who vie defensively with each other for an equitable distribution of common resources. Although at any particular point in time the community may appear to be rife with factional disputes, Lithman's discussion of the 1972 North Shore School controversy illustrates that a coalescence of forces can occur and that effective bargaining with external agencies can also take place.

Although there are many tantalizing aspects to Lithman's book, it lacks a certain precision and focus. One might wish that Lithman had reworked much of his material, that he had more carefully delineated his interest in local-level politics, and that his book were more easily accessible to the nonspecialist. Nevertheless, this volume is a unique and valuable documentation of the social structure of a Canadian Indian reserve, and an important contribution to Canadian native studies.

Reference Cited

Dunning, R.W.

1964 Some Problems of Reserve Indian Communities: A Case Study. *Anthropologica* N.S. 6(1):3-38.

Canadian Inuit Literature: The Development of a Tradition

Robin McGrath

Ottawa, Ontario: National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper Number 94, 1984. x + 230 pp. gratis (paper)

Reviewer: John Matthiasson

University of Manitoba

When a volume on Inuit literature written by the Inuit themselves can be published, the Inuit have truly made the transition from the "Stone Age" to the "Electronic Age." In setting out to write this monograph, Robin McGrath assumed a large task. Originally produced as a thesis, the volume surveys nothing less than all of Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit literature from the earliest recording of oral traditions to the contemporary production of autobiographies, novels, and political treatises. The library research which went into this volume must have been staggering.

McGrath begins with a review of European contact with the Inuit, and then separates poetry and prose traditions, examining each in terms of oral and later written forms. The conclusion is a thematic analysis of contemporary forms of Inuit writing. Nothing is revealed about McGrath's professional background, and it is difficult to determine from the text if this background is anthropological or literary. Each section is replete with quotations, with analysis running throughout the text. There is considerable discussion of the difficulties of translating Inuktitut materials, as well as appropriate criticism of many past attempts at translation. The appendices include a 46-page bibliography, an illustrated list of Inuit periodicals and examples of different attempts to transcribe Inuktitut, including syllabics.

Inuit traditional poetry has long been recognized as having literary merit, and quotations from song duel verse collected by Rasmussen have been included verbatim in many anthropology texts because of their poetic potency. One might raise the hoary question, often used in discussions of "primitive art," as to whether materials created for utilitarian purposes can also be treated as artistic products. But McGrath regards traditional Inuit oral traditions, such as the duel songs used in legal disputes, as poetry, and the examples used make it difficult to disagree. Indeed, virtually all Inuit oral and/or written products are handled in this work as if they were true literature. Although much of McGrath's analysis is appropriately literary in perspective, other perspectives might also have been used. Inuit literature can be a rich lode of data for the psychological anthropologist interested in Inuit cognition and a variety of other topics, or for a person interested in analyzing native perceptions of rapid cultural change. To some extent, McGrath engages in the latter exercise, and the bibliography in this volume can be used for numerous projects in the future.

The Inuit have been idealized in Canadian society, and there is some of this in McGrath's monograph. One almost gets the feeling that literary talent is a normal attribute of the average Inuit, just as many writers have assumed that Inuit are inherently artistic. It is certainly amazing to see how many Inuit have turned their hands to writing, and how quickly they have accepted and mastered this form of expression. Two decades ago, two young Inuit males visited me in upstate New York. Both were employed in Ottawa on the "new orthography" project, and soon after their visit, one of them published a poem in the magazine *North* describing their trip.

There is another reason for this anecdote: it reveals the extent to which government employment, government grants, and civil servant encouragement of contemporary Inuit writers have shaped the form and content of contemporary Inuit writing. Whether territorial or federal, the impact of governmental agencies on the Inuit has been dramatic and has influenced all aspects of their lives. Without these influences, and without government control of school curricula, contemporary Inuit writing may have taken different courses, and perhaps might have been more conventionally literary. Of course, we shall never know.

By writing this monograph, McGrath has become established as *the* expert on Canadian Inuit literature. Hopefully, this work will generate further interest and explorations by others in such a fascinating new field. This is an excellent benchmark with which to begin. I have only two minor quibbles with the text. The first of these is that the language of the Inuit is sometimes called *Inuktitut*, and at other times *Eskimo*, and although the title of this work uses Inuit, the people themselves are referred to back and forth as Inuit and Eskimo. In both cases, the former would have been preferable. The second point is that in at least two places in this mono-

graph, and most blatantly on page 94, McGrath claims that the Inuit had no political institutions. By contrast, there is considerable recent literature in anthropology which refutes the image of primitive communism and complete egalitarianism for the Inuit. However, since not all experts agree on this question, and since there are references in the monograph to the leadership positions held by shamans, perhaps McGrath should not be too severely faulted.

This is an extremely important publication, and the editors of the National Museum of Man Mercury Series should be commended for publishing it. Because Diamond Jenness preserved some of the finest recorded examples of traditional Inuit oral literature for future generations, it is also fitting that this has been designated as a Diamond Jenness Memorial Volume.

The Boston School Integration Dispute: Social Change and Legal Maneuvers

J. Brian Sheehan

New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. xv + 292 pp. \$30.00 (cloth), \$12.00 (paper)

Reviewer: Jacquetta Hill

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This book depicts the workings of the North American class structure through the turmoil of Boston school integration in the 1970s. J. Brian Sheehan is an Australian legal specialist and social anthropologist who argues that Boston's ruling class used public school integration to maintain its control and hegemony when class conflicts threatened to arise out of the transformation of Boston from an industrial and manufacturing centre to a service and financial centre. However, the blue-collar worker elements and the poverty and "pariah" populations of Boston never got together. Instead, they were prevented from achieving class consciousness and were manipulated into divisive ethnic and racial conflict as a new middle-class population expanded into post-World War Two Boston and entered the "new material forces of production" in high-technology service and financial enterprises. Boston's power élite — the Cabots, the Lowells and others who had risen out of a protestant Yankee background — protected their oligarchic investment in urban real estate by manipulating urban renewal to make way for an expanding middle class. They also manipulated the school integration dispute to restructure the education system to train labour for new kinds of businesses resulting from post-World War Two technological changes.

However, shrewd investment in the latest technologies is not sufficient to retain élite class status; this has to be maintained through control of law. Sheehan's special contribution in this book rests on his documentation of how "Boston Brahmins" and a "business élite" retained control of the city through law while relinquishing metropolitan political control to the Irish. The Boston Brahmins moved into the state house and legislature, as well as into federal governmental seats of power. Then, through some remarkable legal arrangements, they oversaw and controlled Boston's legal and financial affairs from afar.

Sheehan's conceptual claims are documented in an extraordinary compilation of information from legal and agency documents, newspaper files, interviews with