

the late eighteen-thirties (which was Scottish-wide, in contrast to the migration predominantly from the south-east of the eighteen-twenties) is admirable. So is the account of the two Aberdeen-based companies founded in 1839-40 — the unsuccessful North British Australasian Company and the highly successful Scottish Australian Company which concentrated on investment rather than trade and commerce. But Dr Macmillan's survey of Scottish opinion on the colonies in the later period is rather scrappy, he does not touch the migration of the later forties, and he neglects the Scottish contribution to Port Phillip: it is rather odd, for example, that outstanding men like William Westgarth, the Learmonth brothers, Angus McMillan and James Graham are not among the two hundred or so names listed in the excellent detailed index. Nor has he chosen to give more than passing attention to the pastoral industry in which the Scots were so prominent, although he provides by the way the interesting estimate that in 1848 about 30% of the pastoral lessees of New South Wales were Scottish (60% on the Darling Downs and 50% in the Western and Wimmera districts of Port Phillip).

Though in some respects this is an unbalanced book, a clear and detailed picture now emerges of the early Scottish contribution to Australia: relatively few convicts, and a disproportionately high contribution to middle-class migration, British investment in the colonies, the pastoral industry and the commerce of the capital cities. Dr Macmillan has handled his chosen aspects with authority and his writing is thoroughly competent, though curiously colourless. It should also be remarked that he may have made — I cannot judge — an important contribution to Scottish economic history. At the least he has cleared the way for more difficult work on the Scots in Australia, investigating, for instance, the degree to which their peculiar values and traditions were reproduced.

Who will tackle the equivalent, very different book on Ireland and Australia?

GEOFFREY SERLE

*Monash University*

*Congressional Insurgents and the Party System, 1909-1916.* By James Holt. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967. 188 pp. U.S. price: \$5.50. N.Z. price: \$6.85.

STUDENTS of politics and social change during the 'Progressive Era' have worked with a remarkably imprecise vocabulary. Words such as 'reformer', 'progressive', 'insurgent', 'liberal', have been used interchangeably with results that are frequently confusing. The confusion is most apparent in attempts to offer explanatory hypotheses about the period in terms of a 'Progressive Movement'. We find that these hypotheses are forced to make some general sense of the substantially different temperaments, preoccupations and careers of such people as Robert La Follette, Jane Addams, Van Wyck Brooks and Woodrow Wilson. The standard resolution of the problem is to defer to the recent literature establishing diversity of intention and performance among 'progressives' but to cling finally to an irredeemably abstract notion of a 'progressive' climate of opinion. Here is a recent and typical example: 'Though they might agree on little else, progressives shared the view that the social order could and must be improved and that such change must not await God's will, natural laws, including the force of the

market place, or any other beneficent force' (Carl Resek from the Introduction to the Bobbs Merrill anthology, *The Progressives*, New York, 1967). Advance beyond this unpromising point may come only with the abandonment of the notion of a 'progressive movement', a notion whose origins are inextricably involved in the period itself. Advance will certainly come from such studies as James Holt's *Congressional Insurgents and the Party System, 1909-1916*, which subjects one of the standard categories to intensive analysis.

The subject of Holt's monograph is the efforts of an influential group of Republican 'insurgents' to reconcile their rôle within the Republican party with their commitment to reform measures during the administration of Taft and the first administration of Wilson. Although he does not probe the question of definition at length, Holt's book implicitly offers important leverage on the matter. For one of the central inferences to be drawn from his study is that the attempt to formulate an ideological (i.e. progressive) politics within the party system during the period was almost certainly doomed to failure. Insurgency was inevitably a mode of political behaviour and not an ideology; it marked the activities of a group of Republican partisans who despite continued frustration and tension generally put the claims of party before ideological abstractions. With the exceptions perhaps of La Follette and Norris, party regularity characterised and ultimately defeated the Republican insurgents.

Holt is explicit on the origin of the question which led him to undertake the study: familiar with a party system (New Zealand?) in which partisanship relates closely to ideological and social divisions, he came to wonder about the situation of this classic reform faction within the predominantly anti-reform Republican party. How did they continue to function? Did they consider permanent alliance with those Democrats with whom they had substantially more in common? How did they view Theodore Roosevelt's third party movement in 1912? These are some of Holt's questions and it must immediately be said that his answers are unfailingly careful and precise, at times challenging to orthodoxies on important issues, and argued with an engaging modesty. There is no trumpeting of 'revisionist' points but one may notice, to cite only one example, his modification of Mowry's standard account of the relationship between reform agitations before 1912 and the personnel and character of the Progressive Party. The book is based on a thorough examination and extremely effective use of manuscript sources together with standard published material. It is a mark of Holt's achievement that he has managed to chart a distinctive and important route through this body of familiar material. Within the framework he establishes, there is little to quarrel with in the content of his analysis; it is sufficient simply to urge students of American political behaviour to read the book for its excellent analysis of the party battles of the Taft years, the campaign of 1912, the attempts at re-organisation of the Republican party along insurgent lines after 1912, the attitudes of insurgents to imperial expansion and war and especially for its discussion of the insurgent styles of La Follette and Norris.

The inquiry is informed throughout by some basic assumptions about how parties work and how partisanship is reconciled with principle: party formation usually involves a tight discipline, so that dissidents are forced to join the opposition, form a third party or suffer recurring defeat. Holt is, in effect, showing both in his questions and answers that the American system does not work like this; hardly more and certainly no less than this

engages his attention. It is clear that he possesses a general answer to his question in advance and he occasionally makes this explicit — for example, in discussing the unreality of Cannon's advice that the insurgents should join the opposition. He knows, that is, that American parties are not parliamentary parties, that they are primarily electoral rather than ideological formations. What he has done, then, is to show at a period of quite acute party crisis precisely how unlike his comparative model American party formations are. It is not a criticism of what he has done to suggest that this approach may not have exploited his comparative perspective to the full. One has the impression from these occasional generalising remarks that Holt places considerable emphasis on constitutional peculiarities in America in his explanation for the distinctiveness of party behaviour. It might be illuminating, however, to pursue the suggestion, at least as old as Ostrogorski, that the diffuseness and anti-ideological bent of American parties arise from the complex social setting in which politics must be conducted as much as from the separation of powers. It is interesting to reflect on the force of Holt's concluding remark that it was the federal system which defeated the insurgents at the national level. The very persistence of the eighteenth century federal system in this way, however, suggests how, in the sphere of politics at least, the collapse of what Robert Wiebe has called nineteenth century 'island communities' was far from complete by 1916. If Wiebe's general argument is valid, then it may seem that politics was neither the true dynamic nor an accurate reflection of social change in Holt's period. Indeed of all American institutions in the early twentieth century, party politics may have been among the least responsive agencies through which reform impulses might be channelled.

The difficulty of pursuing a programmatic or ideological politics within such a party system remained, despite all other evidences of modernisation and national bureaucratisation, until the nineteen-thirties is not beyond.

Holt has provided important material for reflection on these matters. His specific purposes necessarily limit the extent to which he could confront all of the interesting questions his book raises. His exemplary discussion of the issues he does raise only increases our anticipation of the less severely political study of the nineteen-thirties on which he is presently engaged.

P. F. BOURKE

*University of Melbourne*

*The Whigs in Opposition 1815-1830.* By Austin Mitchell. Clarendon Press, 1967. 266 pp. U.K. price: 38s. N.Z. price: \$5.50.

SIR LEWIS NAMIER once offered to describe the politics of George III's early reign without needing to use the term 'party' at all. Dr Mitchell's book is a salutary warning to those who are inclined to apply the advice of that distinguished, if a trifle impetuous, historian to the politics of the post-Napoleonic era.

Even those who are phobic about the perils of permitting ideas of modern party anachronistically to distort our vision of past politics will now, one trusts, acknowledge party as fact in the age of Grey and Liverpool. The 'fact' of course was rather different from that of here and now (even if Dr Mitchell labours too heavily some basic similarities). Vestiges, but only vestiges, still survived of the factional system which dominated