

lowered the rate of duty as a concession to the cheap sugar cry. But in 1846 the Whigs came back and provided for the gradual equalization of the sugar duties. Dr Temperley does not mention the tough fight put up by Lord George Bentinck and the Protectionists for the sugar interests in 1848, which secured at least three years delay in equalization. What he does bring out is the diversive effect of the sugar duties question on the movement itself, which culminated in a serious challenge to the London Committee's leadership by the well known abolitionist George Thompson in 1844. Differences also arose on the question of the African Squadron when the economist William Hutt proposed to withdraw the Squadron and 'leave the trade to itself'. Palmerston's measures in 1850 which practically coerced Brazil into putting an end to the trade settled this question, though by methods which the Anti-Slavery Society could not bring itself to approve.

An interesting chapter follows on the interaction between abolitionists in Britain and those in the United States in 1840 and 1850. The two succeeding chapters on anti-slavery issues of the 1850s and 1860s largely revolve round this question also. With the Anglo-American treaty of 1862, which dealt a death blow to the Cuban slave trade, and Lincoln's emancipation proclamation the questions which had been the Society's main concern were settled. Its work was not done; as Dr Temperley explains in an epilogue the question of the slave trade in East Africa was just coming to the front. Maybe he will give us a sequel at a later date; but in the meantime he is to be congratulated on a scholarly new contribution to a much discussed subject. In an appendix he makes some telling points against Dr Eric Williams's book *Capitalism and Slavery*. Two small slips may be noted. Sir John Jeremie was not governor but procureur-general of Mauritius (p. 33 note) and the convention of 1852 with the Transvaal was the Sand (not the Rand) River Convention.

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*Sir William MacGregor*. By R. B. Joyce. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1971. xvi, 484 pp. N.Z. price: \$15.00.

THE SUBJECT of this biography was one of the most remarkable of British colonial governors. The son of an 'impoverished Scottish crofter', he worked mainly as an agricultural labourer until he entered the University of Aberdeen at the age of twenty-one. He completed a medical course, partly at Aberdeen and partly at Glasgow, and graduated in 1871. Towards the end of 1872, at the age of twenty-six, he was recommended by one of his professors for a post as Assistant Medical Officer in the Seychelles in response to a request from Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor of Mauritius. This was the beginning of a close association between the Earl's son and the crofter's son, extending over forty years. Both were men of wide and scholarly interests and the correspondence between them is one of Mr Joyce's most important sources. MacGregor found less medical work than he expected in the Seychelles and willingly accepted various administrative duties Gordon assigned to him. He also mastered the Creole French spoken in the islands and learned Swahili to talk to the Africans. When Gordon was appointed

the first Governor of Fiji in 1875 he asked for MacGregor as Chief Medical Officer and Health Officer.

For the next quarter of a century MacGregor's career was in the South Pacific. Shortage of funds and a scarcity of good officers facilitated his progress in Fiji from Medical Officer to Receiver-General and then Acting Colonial Secretary. His excellent reputation as a doctor kept him popular with the planters when their relations with other local officers were strained. An encounter with Samuel Griffith at a Federal Council meeting in Hobart in 1886 brought him a new friendship and before long a new post as Administrator and finally Lieutenant-Governor, with a knighthood, in British New Guinea. He left a valuable legacy to Fiji in the beginning of the Central Medical School in Suva but it was his ten years in New Guinea that made the deepest mark on history. As Mr Joyce says, 'the dispute between the British Government and the Australian colonial governments over the limitations of their administrative and financial responsibilities led to a division of powers and severely limited finances which made MacGregor's position even more difficult than that of other colonial governors'. The maximum MacGregor ever had to spend in a year in this vast area was £25,000. As Administrator he was responsible to the Governor of Queensland. He was never an easy subordinate and the new rules introduced by Sir Henry Norman, an experienced Indian soldier-administrator, for the conduct of correspondence caused fierce battles which damaged MacGregor's reputation in the Colonial Office and thus his future career. As the new rules meant that a reply from the Colonial Office to a request normally took six months and might take ten, it is hard not to sympathize with MacGregor. Anthropologists since have criticized some of his policies. 'He realized,' says Mr Joyce, 'that actions such as ending the custom of war or giving the authority of government to men regardless of the traditions of the group, attacked the basis of native society.' But he thought it his duty 'to eliminate . . . the evils of savagery and barbarism'. MacGregor's treatment of murder is particularly interesting. In his ten years 418 Papuans were charged with murder: about two-thirds were brought to trial and 138 death sentences once imposed, but only eleven were carried out. He was trying to 'educate the native out of murder.' MacGregor's changing attitude to European enterprise is also interesting. At first it was discouraging, but when Papuan industry did not develop as he hoped, he was more prepared to look to Europeans for the development which he thought essential.

Though the Colonial Office was 'unstinting in its praise at the end of his rule' it did not give him a first-class governorship but sent him to Lagos. Here again he accomplished much for public health, draining swamps, building a canal which bears his name and co-operating with Sir Ronald Ross in anti-malaria work generally. He was sympathetic to the African chiefs and gave more responsibility to educated Africans but got into hot water with the African press. He also had a serious quarrel on railway matters with the Crown Agents for the Colonies and unfortunately for him the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Montagu Ommanney, had been one of the Crown Agents before taking up this post. A very serious illness at the end of his term led MacGregor now to accept the Governorship of Newfoundland. Here after twenty-one years of married life he was at last able to live quietly with his family. Calls were made on his diplomatic ability by triangular negotiations between the United Kingdom, the United States and a recalcitrant Newfoundland Premier, Sir Robert Bond (whom Mr Joyce

calls Sir Ralph) and these he met successfully. He also emerged with credit from the constitutional crisis which arose when Bond and his rival Morris had equal numbers of supporters in an election. After Newfoundland came his last governorship, Queensland, one he had long desired. His constitutional powers were limited but he made good use of his time by his active interest in the neglected Government Aboriginal settlements and his Chancellorship, by no means purely nominal, of the newly founded University of Queensland.

Altogether this is an important book. Mr Joyce is hampered by the absence of a background of well known and generally accepted history of any of the colonies MacGregor governed. The density of the book makes the constant reference to the 60 pages of footnotes at the end tedious at times. Mr Joyce's literary style is workmanlike but lacks distinction. His judgement on the other hand is sound and there is plenty of evidence of his critical ability. A number of printer's errors have been missed and there are some odd lapses. The Gilbert and Kingsmill Islands mentioned on page 67 are two names for the same group. The labourers there mentioned, though often called Polynesians, were in fact almost all Melanesians or Micronesians. Odder still is the description of MacGregor's advancement from K.C.M.G. to G.C.M.G. as an 'elevation in the peerage'. But the merits of the book far out-weigh its defects. It is not only an important contribution to historical knowledge: MacGregor's rugged character and the variety of his activities and achievements sustain the reader's interest to the end.

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