

reprints Matthew's crucial Appendix to his 1831 treatise, Appendix 2 reprints the letters between Matthew and Darwin, and the other Appendices reprint Matthew's letters to newspapers and journals on a variety of topics. (The letters between Matthew and Darwin had been printed by Gavin de Beer in the *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* in 1959).

Dempster laments the paucity of information about Matthew between 1809 and 1860, apart from his publications *On Naval Timber and Arboriculture* in 1831, and *Emigration Fields* in 1839. Dempster describes briefly that latter book as 'simply a traveller's guide to the climate, flora and fauna of the countries suitable for emigrants', and then dismisses it as being 'clearly all derivative'. In fact, *Emigration Fields* consists largely of a detailed proposal by Matthew for the colonization of New Zealand, by working families, in explicit opposition to the Wakefield theories approved by the New Zealand Company. (At the publisher's request, Matthew hastily added brief accounts of other countries suitable for colonization.) He expressed admiration of the Maori, and strongly advocated intermarriage between them and Britons. He urged that the colonists should leave behind the vices of the Old World, such as hereditary aristocracy, feudal land laws and tobacco — lamenting that missionaries in New Zealand had already addicted many Maoris to tobacco.

Moreover, Dempster has overlooked Matthew's *Prospectus of the Scots New Zealand Land Company*, which reports a meeting held at Perth on 24 August 1839 with Patrick Matthew as Chairman. That company developed into the New Zealand, Waitemata, and Manakou Company, which later claimed much of the land around Auckland — Matthew is not listed amongst the Directors of that latter company.

In New Zealand Charles and James Matthew became friends of Sir George Grey, who was an intimate friend of Darwin. A local descendant of Patrick Matthew has a photograph of Charles Matthew's son Duncan in 1886, dressed in the Highland costume presented by his godfather Sir George Grey — and she treasures one of the 200 copies of the 1831 treatise.

Dempster's account of Matthew is an interesting study; but Matthew clearly deserves a much fuller biography.

G. J. TEE

University of Auckland

Extracts from Journals Relating to the Visit to New Zealand of the French Ship St. Jean Baptiste in December 1769 under the Command of J. F. M. de Surville. Transcribers and translators, Isabel Ollivier and Cheryl Hingley. Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust/National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 1982. 225 pp. N.Z. price: \$18.95.

The Expedition of the St. Jean Baptiste to the Pacific 1769–1770. By J. de Surville and G. Labé. Translated and edited by John Dunmore. Hakluyt Society, London, 1981. x, 309 pp. U.K. price: £12.00

IT IS now some seventy years since the appearance of McNab's translation of

Monneron's and Pottier de l'Horme's journals of Jean de Surville's visit to New Zealand in 1769. The publication by the Alexander Turnbull and National Libraries of the relevant sections of all four of the surviving journals of the voyage — de Surville's, Labé's, Pottier de l'Horme's and Monneron's — is, in consequence, a notable and very welcome event.

In general, as might be expected, the translators have carried out their difficult assignment with admirable skill and patience. They make a few, a very few, mistakes. On p.61, for example, they write 'embaying' for 'laying us on our side', and on p.62 'a small reef' for a 'breaker'. On p.79, too, they omit 'there was not more than 3 feet of water'. Similarly, on p.154, they render 'on entendit une certaine rumeur' as 'quite a clamour went up', where McNab, not the most accurate of translators, writes more correctly 'began to murmur'. And then on p.161 they write 'their legs are so *large* that they seem swollen', where McNab writes, again more correctly, 'thick'. None of this, however, matters since the original is a mere flick of the eye away.

It is only necessary to add that it is perhaps regrettable that the general editor, of what promises to be a series, apparently did not think it necessary to annotate the material. As readers of this otherwise very useful volume will no doubt soon discover for themselves the original authors of these narratives make mistakes; occasionally they even contradict each other. For example, it is unclear whether the local Maori cooked in their *umu* with a single fire or with two, one underneath, another on top after the food had been put in. It is also unclear just how they made their fishing nets, whether from mere 'reeds', or, as Cook suggests, of the 'broad grass plant split into threeds', or from woven lines and in particular, whether they were knotted in the manner of a genuine seine net as in Ysabel. By the same token, one may regret the absence of any commentary on such local peculiarities as tattooing on the buttocks and thighs, which Cook did not see anywhere else except at Cape Brett; or, for that matter, any reference to the intriguing suggestion, in Labé, that the people of Doubtless Bay actually rubbed their teeth rather than wore them down prematurely, as is commonly held, by chewing fern-root.

Professor Dunmore's contribution is, of course, very different in scope. Again, as one has a right to expect in a volume in the Hakluyt series, the typographical slips are few. The translation, by contrast, is often careless and misleading. One may indeed wonder why the respective transcribers and translators did not put their heads together. On p.161, for example, D (Dunmore) says 'Their canoes are rowed with paddles' instead of as O (Miss Ollivier) puts it, 'propelled'. On p.240 D writes: 'The sea still rough', which O renders as 'The sea is a dirty straw colour'. Lower down, on p.241, D makes Labé say: 'The crew both white and black have eaten well, excellent fish', which O translates as 'The whole crew, black and white, ate two good meals from them, as they were excellent fish'. D next omits a line on p.241 of which O makes pretty good sense and proceeds: 'The five boats that came alongside are 28 to 30 feet long, they haul (?) larboard or starboard', for 'The five boats which came alongside are 28 to 30 feet long, canoe-shaped, with washboards (for wash-strakes) to starboard and port' (O).

And this is not the end of it. On p.243 D writes 'the lack of dangers is apparent' for 'the few hazards there are are visible' (O). Lower down a *patu* is said to be 'in the shape of a small shovel', instead of 'like the flat of a paddle' (O). Then further down again the reader is offered, 'They paint their faces and buttocks like the Kaffirs of New Guinea', where the text plainly says 'the Guinea coast'. And

then to round off, on pp.243-4, D writes: 'A few have a bird skin underneath, to cover their nakedness, others do not hide it at all' for 'Some have the skin of a bird, to cover their nudity, without passing underneath, others do not hide it at all'. One last example must suffice, and a more serious one still. On p.254 we read: 'The cress [wild celery] . . . has caused a revolution on four officers including myself who were very exhausted, but it passed after an hour', which O renders, more correctly, 'The cress has worked a revolution on four of the officers, me among them. We had great difficulty breathing, but it passed after an hour'.

Nor is the volume any safer a guide on matters of fact. On p.148 the 'blackbirds', as Monneron suggests, would appear to have been saddlebacks rather than tui. On p.224, it is suggested that Quiros discovered Espiritu Santo on 3 May, instead of 26-27 April, 1606 and sailed again on 13 June instead of 8 June. On p.38, too, the method of lunar distances which, also in the absence of chronometers, Cook used with such conspicuous success on his first voyage, is rather oddly overlooked. More seriously, the volume is singularly lacking in detailed maps, and, as a consequence, minor errors of location occur. An historical geographer may complain of being short-changed, that is to say, the editor has omitted the early parts of both journals, in de Surville's case from 3 March 1769 to 1 May, when the author broke off, and 3 June to 20 August; in Labé's from 3 March 1769 to 21 August, a proceeding which can only be described as not merely unfortunate but inexcusable, and one which it may be hoped the Hakluyt Society will not readily agree to again.

For the rest, as Dunmore's very useful introduction makes clear, de Surville's was a tragic voyage. In many respects, it is highly reminiscent of Mendana's first expedition and still more his second. The bad luck, the faulty judgement, the sheer, not to say, wilful incompetence in the management of both men and ship, the running fights with the Melanesians which, one thinks, might well have been avoided with a little more care and vigilance, and the appalling loss of men: 62 before he reached New Zealand, 103 by the time he made Peru out of a total complement of 194. In the event de Surville even embarked on Mendana's original scheme in 1568 to sail across the South Pacific from west to east. Why, then, did things go wrong? And what, if anything, did the voyage achieve? One thing is clear at once. De Surville was well aware of the need for fresh food to ward off scurvy. As he said, on 22 December 1769, when he bought green stuff, 'it is always a good specific for our men'. Elsewhere he wrote, 'we are not short of good food, but it has not the quality of green vegetables, and fresh meat'. Labé added that 'they are all dying of scurvy . . . and we have no fresh food to give them to relieve them'. He then gave the sick lime juice. Pottier de l'Horme also tells us that it is astonishing how 'these herbs — celery etc. — made our crew better'. And he tells us that 'all those who went on land and ate this stuff, not only escaped death but recovered with astonishing rapidity. One man who was despaired of, whose whole body was swollen, whose mouth was putrid . . . could only be taken to land twice but his consumption of these plants on board brought him great relief, and finally a month later he got up and began to walk after which he was well again'. In a word, the various stages of the voyage, the ocean gaps, were all too long, particularly those from Ysabel to New Zealand, and New Zealand to Peru. Not only that, the *St. Jean-Baptiste* reached both the Solomons and New Zealand at the wrong time of the year, before the yam in the first case, the kumara in the second, were ready. As a result, a good number of the crew, es-

pecially the Malagasy and the numerous Indian or 'Lascar' element, died not merely of vitamin C deficiency, true scurvy, but of ordinary malnutrition. The rest, as Pottier de l'Horme suggests, were victims rather of 'fatigue and misery' and, as we may also think, chronic malaria, which unfitted them for any sea voyage of these proportions.

The voyage itself, as Dunmore shows, was essentially a mere speculative enterprise, more in the tradition of the seventeenth century than the eighteenth, and which was bound to fail. But there was another motive. The immediate objective of the venture was ostensibly Davis Island, approximately 102°W of Paris, 700 leagues W of Peru, in 27-28°S, which Dunmore, following Fleurieu, de Surville's first editor, suggests de Surville took to be Wallis's Island, that is, Tahiti. As Dunmore puts it, into Wallis's real discovery was 'infused a century of past speculation about an island or continental mass known as Davis's Land'. The real stimulus, then, was political rivalry; an ambition to establish a base on an island of real value in the central Pacific, which might form part of the famous continent — a continent which, as Bougainville already suspected, had never been more than a figment of Quiros's imagination. In any event de Surville, secretive to the last but increasingly concerned about the ill health of his men, finally decided to make for New Zealand first. And here the essential defects of the man as navigator and commander, as compared with Cook, stand out in sharp relief. In general, his seamanship was not bad. As an exponent of DR (dead reckoning) he ranks at least with Wallis and Carteret; that is to say, he had a rough idea of where he was. But he lacked the vital curiosity, the flair, the daring of Cook. At one stage he passed within 200 miles of the eastern Australian coast, perhaps closer, since he had the loom of the land for three days. He thus by-passed an indubitable southern continent, no doubt from fear of being embayed, and made for New Zealand, where he had no better hope of succour. Then, having recruited his people, he left behind yet another indubitable 'continent' without further investigation and proceeded east again to Peru, 'as being the place we could reach soonest'. In the end, on 8 April 1770, while attempting to get ashore to recruit help, he was drowned. It was to be another three years before the survivors got away again with a scratch Spanish crew and made for home, by way of the broad Pacific rather than the Atlantic. The voyage, if we may except the re-discovery of the Solomon Islands, had been an utter fiasco. The mapping of New Zealand, the charting of the east coast of Australia, the re-discovery of Torres Strait, the revelation of the Pacific as a whole were all left to Cook.

G. S. PARSONSON

University of Otago

Three Party Politics in New Zealand, 1911-1931. By Michael Bassett. Historical Publications, Te Atatu, 1982. 67pp. N.Z. price: \$7.50.

NOT SINCE the 1940s has a politician written a work of history. Unlike Downie Stewart, Michael Bassett was trained as a historian and for several years taught at