

of the River Improvement Society which aimed to convert unsightly drain outlets into 'artistic waterfalls' (p. 369).

One of the major criticisms levelled against Volume I of this series was the failure of the authors to impress upon the reader what life in Canterbury really was like. Although Dr. Scotter has managed to give a more balanced account, his treatment of social developments is disappointingly selective, especially his final chapter carefully entitled 'Aspects of Canterbury Social Life'. He includes some interesting details on nineteenth-century conditions and there are glimpses of social malaise during both depressions. But much is omitted.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Gardner notes that the truest Canterbury is perhaps a private and personal one, best found in the work of poets such as William Pember Reeves, Ursula Bethell, Allen Curnow and Denis Glover (p. xxiv). However, apart from stating that attention to the arts and to education are characteristic of Canterbury social life, Dr. Scotter does not show us this personal side of the province. Instead we are referred to essays in the forthcoming Volume II. Although this may prove to be an unjust criticism, it is difficult to envisage how a book dealing ostensibly with 1853-76 will be able to remedy the deficiencies for the twentieth century. The author of Volume III has chosen to concentrate instead on the predominance of religious bodies as the distinctive feature of Canterbury society.

On balance, however, this book is a valuable addition to New Zealand historical writing. The author does suggest some avenues for future research which it is a pity he felt unable to pursue himself (pp. 24, 110, 143). At times detail has been added at the expense of readability. But above all, Dr. Scotter's survey is a detached one. At no time does he show signs of approaching the heights of extravagant provincialism attained by the *Lyttelton Times* in 1918, when Canterbury was described as 'the most fortunate of . . . provinces, the most progressive, the most earnest, the best in which to labour, and the best in which to live' (p. 365). Dr. Scotter deserves credit for a scholarly monograph.

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The Colonial Empire: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century.

By D. K. Fieldhouse. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966. 450 pp.
U.K. price: 63s. N.Z. price: \$7.90.

MR. FIELDHOUSE'S new book was written for a German series, Fiechen's *Weltgeschichte*, and published in German before this English addition appeared. This is the age of series and Weidenfeld and Nicolson are running two in double harness, for the Universal History to which the volume before us belongs is obviously not identical with the History of Civilization, of which Sir Ronald Syme is editor. Let us hope their horses do not bite one another.

Mr. Fieldhouse had a formidable task. Not only is the subject enormous, but its limits are not easily defined. What is a 'colonial' empire? At what point, if any, can Russian expansion eastward be said to have taken this form? The Russians say, at no point, and thus exclude themselves from the ranks of the colonial powers. Mr. Fieldhouse does not let them get away with this. As he says, 'Siberia was a settlement colony

resembling Australia, created by a similar process of penal and voluntary emigration'. But, no doubt for lack of space and of accessible material, he deals only with Russian Central Asia. In general, he tells us, his argument is 'based . . . on the propositions that, above all else, empire meant power and authority; and that the process by which European authority was imposed on other parts of the world and the means by which it was sustained constitute a valid historical study in their own right'. He admits that 'the balance between different colonies and periods of time does not always reflect their intrinsic importance', but hopes that 'the book may act as a prospectus for a virtually new field — the comparative study of colonial empire'.

It would be interesting to know what kind of market the publishers had in mind for the book. University libraries will of course get it, but the more important question is who will read it. It assumes too much knowledge to be suitable as an introductory textbook. It mentions Curzon twice, for instance, but never expressly says that he was viceroy of India. Inevitably, it is pretty highly concentrated. The Germans, with their insatiable appetite for facts, might master it as general historical reading; but we suspect that the English and *a fortiori* the New Zealand general reader (if there is such a person) might find the book tough going. With the comparative study of institutions we enter a field in which history approximates to sociology. Some may think it is none the worse for that; but there is a risk that this kind of history may have the personalities strained out of it as it passes through the investigator's sieve. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, appears in this history only once, in connexion with a naval expedition to West Africa, and is indexed under the same heading as his son. Warren Hastings does not appear at all.

None the less the more mature student will find much to interest him in Mr. Fieldhouse's book. It is a work of wide scholarship and independent judgment. Mr. Fieldhouse points out the danger of over-emphasising the distinction between the 'first' and 'second' British empire, not however to reject it but to make the point in a new way: 'the real contrast was between the relatively small and largely homogenous American empire as it was before 1783 and the complex world-wide empire of 1815'. He then goes on to draw attention to 'the disintegration of most of the original American empires in the period 1763-1830' as marking a watershed between two different types of empire. In the earlier epoch it is the Spanish imperial system that especially attracts his admiration. 'In principle at least the Spanish empire consisted of *estorreinos* and *esosreinos*, three kingdoms of Old Spain and those of the New World. No more satisfactory constitutional basis for empire has ever been invented.' Spanish methods worked even in the east: in the Philippines 'the Spanish used the colonizing techniques they had worked out in America and created the first and for long the only true European colony in the east'. In the more modern epoch he draws another line in 1882: 'the crisis which led to partition had its roots in the Congo situation and Anglo-French disagreement over Egypt; but it was made explosive by Bismarck'. He leans over backward to be fair to the German colonial empire but is unrealistic in his apparent rejection of the 'case for not returning German colonies' after the first World War. Allied statesmen had to take the views of their electorates into account. Besides, the return of the German colonies would not have prevented the rise of Nazism but made it more dangerous.

We pass over Mr. Fieldhouse's treatment of the growth of the British and other empires after 1815 and move on to the final chapters, which are the best in the book. Under the heading (borrowed from the French historian Brunschwig) 'Myths and Realities of the Modern Colonial Empires', he deals faithfully with Hobson, Lenin and other modern critics of imperialism and 'colonialism', and by a careful examination of the facts demolishes the myth that modern empires 'were great machines deliberately constructed by Europe to exploit dependent peoples by extracting economic and fiscal profit from them'. The argument is impressive and readers whose interests are contemporary rather than historical might well find this chapter and the epilogue on decolonization worthwhile, even if they have no time to tackle the whole book.

A comprehensive survey of this kind can hardly hope to escape minor errors, though some might have been eliminated by more careful proof-reading — e.g. 'Khalif' for Khalifa (p. 224), 'Edward' for Edwin Montagu (p. 235), 'Opulu' and 'Sawaii' for Upolo and Savaii (p. 365). Kitchener arrived at Fashoda with a gun-boat flotilla, two Sudanese battalions and a hundred Highlanders — hardly 'a large army' (p. 224); and I can find no authority for the statement on p. 231 that 'the Russians occupied northern Korea'. Their influence was dominant for a time in Korea and a partition appears to have been mooted; but it was never carried out. These points, admittedly, are only on the fringe of the subject.

A further point concerns the publisher rather than the author. There are sixty-two illustrations, well selected and on the whole, considering their small scale, well reproduced. But the grouping of these illustrations, covering as they do a period of four centuries, in a continuous series between pages 210 and 211 has a kaleidoscope effect which is hardly an aid to historical understanding. If the grouping was necessary, it would have been desirable at least to have references to the plates on the appropriate pages of the text. But it would have been preferable to distribute them, like the maps, throughout the book. This *caveat* made, the publishers must be congratulated on a notable piece of book production, as must the author on the large measure of success with which he has carried out the task the publishers assigned to him.

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The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942. By John A. Salmond. Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1967. 240 pp. U.S. price: \$6.50.

ALTHOUGH European observers such as Alexis de Toqueville, James Bryce, and Gunnar Myrdal have produced some of the most penetrating analyses of American society and government, the study of American history has been generally neglected by non-Americans until recent years. While American historians have made important contributions to the historiography of many other countries, it is hard to think of more than a handful of significant books on the history of the United States written by outsiders.