

share the Buck legend. Why? Primarily, I think, because he had come to embody a New Zealand dream. As a man of mixed ancestry he had made good, overseas. Was not this a demonstration to the rest of the world of New Zealand's achievement in race relations? For Buck was, as Condliffe reminds us in conclusion, 'a Maori, it is true, but he was also Pakeha, and it would be wrong to portray him as entirely one or the other' (p. 226).

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Discovering Monaro: A Study of Man's Impact on his Environment. By W. Hancock. Cambridge University Press, 1972. xii, 209 pp. N.Z. price: \$10.00.

REGIONAL history was until recently given less than its rightful place in Australian academic studies, in spite of the inspiring example of Margaret Kiddle's *Men of Yesterday*. However, the work of some young historians, notably D. B. Waterson and the late G. L. Buxton, has now demonstrated the value of regional studies. An adequate social history of Australia can be written only on the basis of a full range of surveys such as these.

Perhaps nothing has signalized the rise of Australian regional history more than the entry of the country's most eminent living historian into the field. It should be pointed out at once that *Discovering Monaro* is not a regional history in the accepted sense, though I understand that Sir Keith Hancock's original intention was to attempt for Monaro what Margaret Kiddle had done for Western Victoria. He has used wide-ranging studies in Monaro history to illuminate a general theme of Australia's past, present and future. Sir Keith does not 'survey' the Monaro community in all its aspects. Rather, he seeks to 'discover' regional landmarks in the working out of a great theme: man's impact on his environment. Monaro is his canvas, but the picture he paints is continental in its perspectives. *Discovering Monaro* is, in sample, discovering Australia. New Zealand readers will be reminded of W. H. Oliver's *Challenge and Response* in which the aim was 'to examine the history of New Zealand within a regional context'.

In another dimension, Sir Keith seeks to blend history and ecology. His motives in this second exercise are clear. As an Australian, he is concerned about the future of his country's whole environment. As an adopted Canberra, he is concerned about the neighbouring tablelands and high country, especially the latter, which is in danger of being overrun by tourists and skiers. To speak with full authority as both historian and ecologist requires more than one lifetime, as Sir Keith regretfully admits, but his efforts to equip himself in the latter role may be described as both tremendous and successful. In 'exploring' (as distinct from 'discovering') what is meant by ecology, he was led into a range of studies in physical and social sciences which would have frightened or overwhelmed lesser men. The result is a 'synoptic' study in which no one element, whether of historical evidence or of scientific enquiry, is allowed to dominate.

In a third dimension, *Discovering Monaro* has a practical moral purpose: to use past experience to influence the future in public opinion and government policy. The role of 'moralist' is not one which Sir Keith assumes easily or lightly. There is too much in the difficult task of finding out what

history and ecology have to say, and too little that is unequivocal in their findings for him to preach ecological repentance from an historical pulpit. In a basic sense, Sir Keith is a teacher and not a prophet. It presents the best evidence he can find, acknowledges its partial and inconclusive nature, yet encourages others to move on to make the vital discoveries he can not make himself. At most, he erects signposts to promising tracks of research.

If Sir Keith encourages Australians to be reasonable about the future of land-use, he discourages them from being unreasonable about its past. 'If we are looking for guilty men, we shall be wasting our time', he writes (pp. 108-9). The villains of the past were not individuals but impersonal forces: scientific ignorance and 'economic pressure'. In the more enlightened, prosperous days of 'improvement' since 1945, Sir Keith sees the future already dawning. 'Monaro is not an aggregate of human atoms; it is a deeply-rooted society. People in Monaro do not merely own their land, they belong to it' (p. 163). Perhaps all is for the best in the best of all pastoral worlds, but the reader is hardly prepared by Sir Keith's account for so glowing a conclusion. Even the casual traveller down the road to Cooma may be permitted his doubts. But at least Sir Keith demonstrates his sympathy with farmers, an attitude perhaps not common among academics. After all, when scientists and administrators have told farmers how to use the land wisely, it is still in the hands of farmers.

In the preface to his *Riverina*, Buxton records Sir Keith's earlier criticism of regional historians: they fail to relate the parish pump to the cosmos (not his happiest phrase). *Discovering Monaro* is Sir Keith's answer to his own criticism. Yet there must remain doubts that an historian can make the great leap from selected 'examples' in a single region to a generalized Australian 'man', using and abusing 'his' environment. In principle, Buxton was sound in his contention that the 'particulars' of regional history could not be distilled into generalizations for Australia until most of the country (at least) was covered by regional studies. But the fact remains that Sir Keith's refusal to be restricted by a few academic rules and boundaries has given Australia a wise, humane, and stimulating book, one which deserves an audience as wide as the continent — and beyond.

The text is illuminated by excellent maps, the work of Dan Coward. The same cannot be said of the illustrations which are not well chosen nor adequately captioned. There are far too many printer's errors and the reversal of the cover picture of a Snowy River crossing is a bad gaffe. It would not have done for Banjo Paterson, and undoubtedly it would not have done for Sir Keith — if he had seen it in time.

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Australia in the War of 1939-1945: The Government and the People 1942-1945, II. By Paul Hasluck. Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970. xvi, 771 pp. Australian price: \$4.00.

THIS MASSIVE VOLUME is a gold mine of information about Australia-at-war during the Pacific fighting. As indicated by the title — and the author's career — the angle of approach is through problems of government, administration and politics, together with some attention to the people's reaction to what authority was doing to them. It is based primarily on the voluminous and admirably kept records of the Australian war-time ad-