

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-

ministration, including the War Cabinet: there is no parallel to this material in N.Z. Hasluck draws heavily on these authoritative papers, often quoting lengthily. His personal judgments are at first sparing, but show more sharpness as the volume progresses; and just occasionally he permits himself an illuminating comment based on personal experiences as an officer in the young Department of External Affairs.

In 1942 the new Australian Labour government became sincerely convinced that the country was in imminent danger of invasion, and it was greatly concerned that this fear was not fully shared in Washington and London. Thus the basic task of foreign policy was set: a vigorous campaign to influence the decisions on grand strategy (and later on peace-making) by Roosevelt and Churchill. Hasluck follows this campaign in great detail. Australia's military predicament, and the views of the chiefs of staff in Australia, the U.K. and U.S.A. are set out fully, and one can follow almost day by day the development of professional opinion, and the politicians' reactions to the professionals and to each other. However, clamour for overseas aid was accompanied (and justified) by the rigorous organization of the nation for total war; a task involving not only enthusiastic patriotism but a vastly complex structure. This second topic is also dealt with in detail which is sometimes overwhelming; but it too offers rewarding material for specialists, and an admirable index facilitates its use. Again, as in New Zealand, war-effort became entangled in domestic politics. Overall agreement on the need to fight victoriously by no means extinguished differences on other issues; nor, incidentally, did it ensure industrial peace. Here, then are three main themes interwoven, though sometimes handled in separate sections, so that chronologies overlap: external relations, war time administrative machinery, and domestic politics.

This ample canvas is sometimes overcrowded, but patterns emerge for the attentive reader. There is the basic chronological framework. Fear of invasion and the plea for help in order to survive is supplemented and gradually replaced by the argument that Australia must be strengthened as the base for victorious counter-attack, and in turn concern for winning the war is gradually replaced by concern about post-war reconstruction. Again, there are the rise and fall of emotional tension, the developing shortages and mounting criticism, the questionable practices of a general election campaign. Such things are faithfully described, and trends traced step by step. More interesting, however, in the long run is the way Hasluck searches his material for answers to important underlying questions. Of these perhaps the most important concerns the relationships in war-time and in peace-making between a small power and its great allies. Can a small power influence a great one, and if so, how? What justification was there in the claims made from time to time by Curtin and Evatt that Australia had exerted influence in questions of grand strategy and in the preliminary planning of the post-war world? How should the career of that flamboyant Minister of External Affairs, Herbert Evatt, be assessed? And how did the relationships between Australia and her great allies work out during his period of power?

Apart from routine inter-governmental consultations — often very plain spoken — Australia's efforts to influence the higher conduct of the war followed three main lines. The first might be called the organic, the informal, the gentlemanly co-operation within the family. It was represented by effective personal contacts with London policy-makers, politicians and offi-

cialists alike, exploiting the privileges of Dominion status. The second line was the fight to establish constitutional-type rights, and institutions through which they could be exercised: for example, a Pacific War Council in Washington to deal with the strategy of war against Japan. And the third line was personal: vehement crusades fought by Evatt both in correspondence and by personal onslaughts in London, Washington and San Francisco. Hasluck's views on the effectiveness of these different strands in foreign policy had been sketched in articles published before he had become so immersed in public business that the present volume could not be finalised and published till many years after the main research had been finished; but he now spells out his conclusions. The first line was in his view quite the most fruitful, partly of course owing to the personal qualities of Bruce as Australian representative on the British War Cabinet. The Pacific War Council proved utterly ineffective as a means for enabling Australia or any other small country to exert influence over policy. And Evatt's crusades, despite his great ability and drive, were essentially non-productive, even at times counter-productive. As to the total effect of Australia's importunities — which he describes with his usual detail — Hasluck says that it is hard to find positive evidence of significant changes brought about, and even suggests that the task of any Australian government was not so much to assist in guiding world events as to accept such events and adapt Australian policy successfully to them. And some blistering comment cuts Evatt's importance down to size.

It may prove that in thus discounting extravagant claims for the importance of Australian statesmanship during Labour's period of office Hasluck has pushed the balance a little too far towards scepticism: a slightly different (though still critical) impression is left by Alan Watt's brief, judicious volume, soon one hopes to be supplemented by his personal reminiscences. Nevertheless, the evidence presented by Hasluck is formidable on this as on most of the other issues which arose in war-time Australia. A New Zealander, however, might be permitted a mild complaint. Rich as is his documentation, it is a pity that he did not glance at New Zealand materials. They would have improved his account of the discussions connected with the withdrawal of dominion troops from the middle east (he missed Curtin's significant outburst to Berendsen in May 1943 when it was decided to leave the 2nd. N.Z.E.F. in Europe) and of the Canberra Pact and its consequences for relations with the Americans; though on this last matter there is doubtless in Canberra much more material than Hasluck has cited. Again, having watched efforts in this country to build up from scratch a Department of External Affairs and a diplomatic service, it is a little disappointing that Hasluck's discussion of Australia's governmental agencies should have had so little on her progress with a similar though larger-scale task. The Australian Department was still quite young when it had to handle the crisis of a major war and (after October 1941) a very unusual Minister. Hasluck notes that Evatt was apt to go his own way, making little use of his experts; but apart from sundry other hints from time to time he gives little impression of the Department.

Such criticisms are minor. It is clear from the first what this volume is trying to do, and where its main source material lies. It is an invaluable contribution to the history of World War II, seen by a keen Australian eye.