

standard regional history for both Queensland and Australia, supplementing earlier works such as Margaret Kiddle's *Men of Yesterday*, and later studies as G. L. Buxton's history of the Riverina. Besides stimulating other works on Queensland history, most unfortunately still buried as university theses, his work is valuable in questioning the over-simplifications of general Australian historians who perforce wrote national histories before either colonial (State) or regional studies had been completed.

Waterson's second book stems both from his initial study, which gave considerable stress to politics, and from his continuing interest particularly in one Queensland politician. In explaining why the Pure Merinos (whom he clearly disliked) were defeated on the Downs he was forced into attempts to analyse Queensland politics, which led him for instance to uncover a group that he thought could almost be described as 'professional politicians; men avid for a paid office with its power and perquisites' (*Squatter*, p. 2). As well he made the as yet unproven claim that 'Downs' politics reflected Queensland politics as a whole' (p. 4), and suggested for Queensland as well as the Downs that politics 'were a matter of personalities rather than parties . . . [yet] it is a mistake to assume that fundamental issues played little part' (p. 5). His second book with its short biographies of the 635 members who sat in the Queensland Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council in his period should give the raw material for analyses which can more definitely prove or disprove such questions. In practically every case he has been able to find the occupation of every member and some details of their lives. While the cautious historian will still need to check every reference (for each fact in the space given could not be related to a specific source, nor has any attempt been made to show the criteria for assessing the reliability of the various sources), we now have innumerable leads for illuminating not only Queensland politics but also those of the other states by comparison.

Waterson's own work is now centring around one Queensland politician, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and on the basis of both of these books with their comparative approach Australian and overseas historians should look forward to the completed biography. It must throw light on Queensland politics and indeed on general Australian history, for McIlwraith was a significant figure for so many years. Waterson's Victorian residence is relevant insofar as Victoria supplied so much of the capital behind McIlwraith and his supporters. Waterson has also already suggested comparisons between McIlwraith and some of the rugged individuals in the United States.

Such virtues in Waterson's work relate to his double translation. It is relevant now that all outsiders should be watching Queensland, in the hope of understanding a unique leader from the soil very close to Waterson's Darling Downs.

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Makers of Fortune: A Colonial Business Community and its Fall. By R. C. J. Stone. Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1973. 240 pp. N.Z. price: \$7.85.

DR STONE'S book is a skilful compression of his Ph.D. thesis, and it is a significant addition to the literature of New Zealand economic history in general and of the Auckland region in particular. It provides a lightly

sketched history of Auckland's economic activities from its early days, but its core is the decade of the 1880s, the boom of the early years and the slump which followed and continued into the 1890s. For the 1880s, Dr Stone explores the formation and fortunes of Auckland companies with particular emphasis on the trend towards fixed interest finance as the decade proceeded; he explores the role of urban real estate development in terms familiar from Melbourne's experience; he examines the timber industry with the eye of an economist rather than that of a romantic; and he then examines the finances of leading Auckland businessmen, T. Morrins, J. C. Firth, J. Logan Campbell, and the circle centred on Thomas Russell. Throughout this thorough study of the business community, one is impressed by the range of sources used by Dr Stone and the facility with which they are combined. Legal records of various kinds, company records, and personal correspondence are all integrated with the more familiar newspaper, parliamentary and secondary sources. Although the documentation is less lavish than that of the thesis, one is seldom left wondering about the authority for particular statements, and only rarely does one feel that a particular source needed more scepticism.

Dr Stone's analysis is essentially that Auckland businessmen became over-ambitious, and that with the aid of ill-judged assistance from financial institutions, they became committed to enterprises requiring more capital than they could comfortably service. The Matamata estates — or the N.Z. Frozen Meat & Storage Company with which readers of this *Journal* will be familiar — were typical of a large number of undertakings. This interpretation, and its sharp contrast with contemporary emphasis on the morality of businessmen, is convincingly developed. There are, however, more questionable subsidiary themes.

For example, Dr Stone argues that Auckland's growth and business activity was not greatly dependent on export activity, and he lays considerable emphasis on the relatively slow growth of Auckland's exports. But in a recent review article in this *Journal*,¹ he drew attention to the desirability of setting regional activity in a national framework, and while his book generally conforms to that maxim, he seems to have overlooked its relevance to this particular theme. For Auckland's business activities depended heavily on overseas finance, and the relevant exports in this context are not those of Auckland but those of New Zealand (or, it could be argued, of Australasia). Investors in London may not even have known where Auckland was; but the assurance that they would have sought was that New Zealand would have sufficient sterling funds to service their loans and their eventual repayment. The internal transactions by which Aucklanders obtained the sterling funds from exporters wherever they were located would not have been a matter of concern to the overseas lender. It is surely inconceivable that the external finance on which Auckland businessmen drew would have been available had British investors been totally pessimistic about the prospects of New Zealand exports. The limited growth of exports through Auckland is an interesting comment on Auckland's pattern of growth, but it does not justify any statements about the dependence of that growth on exports.

¹ R. C. J. Stone, 'Clio and the Parish Pump: Recent Books on New Zealand Local History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, VII, 1 (April 1973), 76-84.

Secondly, despite his impressive command of the sources, on at least one point Dr Stone does not sufficiently divorce himself from contemporary comment. He continues to use the contemporary concept of 'depression' (with linguistic variations) without distinguishing the various meanings which were attached to it. In places, it could refer to the state of business confidence, or to the state of the money market. In other places, it seems to refer to lower incomes or a distinct lowering of living standards. These are clearly different, and all of Dr Stone's work points towards a liquidity crisis and not to any diminution of incomes. Although he notes the importance of Logan Campbell's brewery profits in explaining why he was less troubled than other Auckland businessmen, and although he notes in passing the long-term benefits of the assets formed in the 1880s, Dr Stone nowhere clearly distinguishes between liquidity problems and the course of income streams. Dr Stone makes a few incidental comments on the insecurity of the 'long depression' interpretation of the 1880s — successful Auckland companies were formed in the 'good years' of the early 1880s and not in the depressed middle of the decade; the successful companies benefited from low capital charges as well as low wages, etc. — but he does not recognize that until income statistics are estimated in the manner of Butlin for Australia, the essential test of that interpretation cannot be made. And only when it is made, can the Auckland crisis be recognized as a liquidity crisis as a result of overtrading on an upward trend, or a liquidity crisis accompanying a stagnation of incomes.

Other readers would no doubt find their chief interest in other parts of Dr Stone's book. But few readers will find it other than stimulating.

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Decently and in Order: The Centennial History of the Auckland City Council. By G. W. A. Bush. Collins, Auckland, 1971. 637 pp. N.Z. price: \$5.00.

TO WRITE a commissioned, commemorative history of a self-important institution is a hard job.

An encyclopaedic coverage is often the result: no actor but must have his mention in the index, no committee but must have its paragraph. The work sags under the sheer weight of undigested fact.

Dr Bush has produced just such a book. It is only fair to mention that he is aware of this problem. In his preface, he states: 'with so great a range of topics to be covered over such a time-span, superficiality has been unavoidable' (p. 8); in the absence of any scholarly survey of the city's growth, his book 'makes no claim to fill this yawning gap. At most it may assist the courageous academic who finally accepts the gauntlet of synthesizing the development of Auckland as a whole' (p. 7). It is his opinion that no other institution, public or private, has a history which can throw so much light on Auckland's past.