

as diplomats because, on the one hand, the Colonial Office and imperial authorities generally would not accord them the powers and, on the other, neither would the colonial premiers and governments they represented. Of course, Dr Dalziel is well aware of these limitations on the powers of the colonial representatives in London: for example, she points out that 'The government had little sympathy with Vogel's claims for a more formal recognition and definition of the role of his office', and that 'Seddon was not prepared to allow a distant Agent-General to represent views to the Colonial Office that might not accord with his own or to commit the colony in any way'. She virtually sums up the position in her 'Conclusion' where she holds, 'He was not, in the strict sense of the word, a diplomat, for this would have denied the nature of the relationship that existed between colony and mother country. Nevertheless it is clear that his role, if not his status, was becoming that of a diplomat . . . His office was the beginning, for New Zealand, of diplomatic representation overseas.'

This study has been most thoroughly and impressively researched. No significant source has been overlooked. The product of this far-reaching research, undertaken mainly in Wellington and London, has been competently organized. Dr Dalziel has discussed the various activities of the Agents-General, such as their recruitment of migrant workers, the raising of loans on the London market, the promotion of New Zealand interests in the Pacific islands, and the general 'booming of New Zealand'. She is to be commended for traversing so many complicated issues so expertly. In view of her chosen subject, her analyses and conclusions may occasionally lean a little too heavily towards giving credit to the Agents-General for work in which others were also involved but, if this is so, her fresh interpretation will command the more interest.

The praise which should justifiably be extended to the author for a notable work cannot be extended to the publishers for the form in which this book appears. The cover is attractive enough with its portraits of Reeves, Featherston, Vogel, Bell and Perceval looking out through a green haze, but in the review copy it has, after a single reading involving no careless handling, begun to part company from the rest of the book. Perhaps this is the price we have to pay for production at a very reasonable cost in an inflationary era, but the Victoria University Press can take little pride in such shoddy work. In addition to seeing that books of scholarly value are published, university presses should accept the responsibility for publishing books that remain presentable for years and not for days only.

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Miners and Militants — Politics in Westland 1865–1918. Edited by Philip Ross May. Whitcoulls for the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1975. xi, 174 pp. N.Z. price: \$8.50.

THE ESSAYS in this volume are written by six former M.A. history students at Canterbury University. Despite the title, readers expecting a probing analysis of Westland's mythic capacity to produce Coal Flats, Arawata Bills and

intransigents will be disappointed. The emphasis is on the beginning and end of the period, as if nothing happened in between: social structure and social change are neglected; and the economic history of the region gets little mention too. Even so, the essays are generally useful, making available important detail which would otherwise remain buried in theses.

Philip May in his 'Politics and Gold' and Bernard Conradson in 'Politics and Penury' are concerned with the political emergence of the West Coast. The theme of May's succinct essay, the events leading up to the separation of Westland from Canterbury Province, is already well known to readers of his earlier *The West Coast Gold Rushes*. Conradson's article deals with the Coast's squalid experience with regional self-government from 1868 to 1876. Its failure he attributes to the difficulties of acquiring good governors in an abnormally large floating population, and, with waning gold production, Westlanders wanted to sell their independence for a mess of central government pottage. More might have been said about jobbery and speculation in Westland's local authorities, important perhaps for Seddon's political education.

The essay on Seddon, 'Politics and Personality', by Janice Lockwood, is a capably organized discussion of Seddon's relationship with his constituency from 1879 to 1890. Few Westland politicians before 1890 held their seats as continuously as he did. What they lacked, and Seddon uniquely possessed, she does not spell out, except to say that 'Personality was a crucial function determining the relationship between Seddon and his constituents'. Perhaps he cultivated local interest more assiduously than they.

The engineering feats and politics involved in constructing the Midland Railway from the 1880s to the 1920s are the uneasily mixed concerns of John Rosanowsky in 'Politics and Railways'. He demonstrates how from conception to completion the project embarrassed a series of governments, and stimulated provincial rivalries. This essay and Lockwood's implicitly qualify the commonly-accepted view that the rise of the Liberals transformed the localist basis of New Zealand politics.

In 'Politics and War' Len Richardson diminishes in size a number of legends — including the notion that during the first World War West Coast coal miners acted as the militant advance-guard of New Zealand socialism. Certainly miners were restless during the war, but mainly over specific issues. Opposition to conscription as an anti-capitalist principle was confined to a small minority of miners, and divided more than it unified. This essay has interesting implications for the New Zealand radical tradition. But like most of the contributions there is a certain diffidence about relating material to the flow of the New Zealand mainstream.

Patrick O'Farrell's 'Politics and Coal', the most lively of the six essays, deals with the causes and consequences of the 1908 Blackball strike. He argues that up to 1907 the hangover of the disastrous 1890 maritime strike strongly conditioned coal miners to political moderation and acceptance of the arbitration system. What radicalized the unionists in 1908, O'Farrell claims, arose from a successful conspiracy by a handful of mainly Australian agitators who played on the miners' sense of union solidarity. Unfortunately, there is no discussion in this text of the evidence for this devilry. The only piece of documentation is a vital footnote no. 24, where the reader is cavalierly advised that detailed source references can be found in two of Professor O'Farrell's works written in the mid-1950s.

There are a few minor points. O'Farrell's assertion on p. 102 that coal miners were occupationally immobile does not quite square with his statement on p. 105 that during the mining recession of winter 1905 'the familiar process of men leaving in search of jobs elsewhere began'. What is the basis for the statement that New Zealand Catholics were disproportionately wage-earners and supporters of progressive parties (p. 130)? Mortgagor and mortgagor are confused on p. 42.

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Between Governments and Banks: A History of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand.

By G. R. Hawke. Government Printer, Wellington. 1973. 244 pp. N.Z. price \$6.

DURING the great period of nation-making in the 1920s, new countries particularly in central and eastern Europe, plagued by inflation and financial chaos, sought the advice and assistance of the Bank of England which helped them to set up, as part of their recovery programmes, their own central banks in its own image. A central bank, organized and managed in the real or imagined style of the Bank of England, was associated with independence and stability. Of course, by the time of the great days of decolonization of the 1960s, a central bank had become a symbol of success, like a flag or an anthem; superficially, the Bank of England was still the model, but it was the International Monetary Fund which provided the advice, the money and the seconded experts. Such is the mystique of money and the advisability of being nice to the IMF that this recent great spawning of central banks took place when the *raison d'être* of central banks had largely disappeared.

As this history of New Zealand's central bank suggests, during most of the bank's existence New Zealand governments have treated the Reserve Bank as a sort of unusual government department, sometimes of a minor character. In some respects it is curious that a country which cheerfully abolished its non-elected legislative chamber has not done the same for the Reserve Bank. But one of the solid virtues of Dr Hawke's book is that it explains clearly the wide range of administrative functions the bank has accumulated over the years: someone has to administer exchange control, manage government debt, get the notes printed and coin minted and explain government policy to the trading banks and other financial institutions (and make sure the latter understand and can obey it).

The reason politicians and officials decided in the early 1930s that New Zealand needed a central bank is that the Bank of England, on being consulted by the government about financial matters (in particular, the depreciation of the New Zealand pound in 1930) advised the establishment of a central bank on Bank of England lines. If the government was to pursue independent but orthodox policy over currency and foreign exchange, it must equip New Zealand with a Bank of England type of institution. It does not appear that the powers the government wanted were seen as distinct from the institution. Yet there was no doubt that