

Not Only Affairs of State: an Autobiography. By Jack Kent Hunn. Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1982. 227 pp. Price \$20.95 hard cover, \$10.95 soft cover.

SIR JACK HUNN is best known for the 'Hunn Report' on the Maori people, commissioned by Walter Nash when Prime Minister, but not published or acted upon until after the National party returned to power in 1960 and Ralph Hanan was Minister of Maori Affairs. Sir Jack has a chapter on the Hunn Report in this autobiography, but his long career in the New Zealand public service involved him in many spheres. He was at one time or another Head or Acting Head of the Departments of Internal Affairs, Defence, and Maori Affairs, a Public Service Commissioner, and President of the P.S.A. He also served New Zealand and the United Nations on a number of international assignments, usually investigating or giving advice on public administration. Sir Jack's earlier life was unremarkable—a secure childhood in Masterton and twenty-two years in the Public Trust Office—but from the time he became a leading figure in the P.S.A. during World War Two until his retirement in 1965 he was continuously involved in important and interesting work. Indeed he remained a prominent public figure until his 'second retirement' in 1977.

Clearly there is good material here for an autobiography, but this book is not remarkably revealing of the man or the affairs he was involved in. From time to time Sir Jack has something interesting to say about one of the many issues he faced or one of the powerful and famous people he rubbed shoulders with. And he is entertaining in a gentle manner. Sir Jack likes a funny story, is intrigued by strange coincidences (he is forever meeting people in Connecticut or Guyana who know a friend or neighbour or friend's neighbour in Khandallah or Takapuna) and the narrative is dotted with yarns of one kind or another. I enjoyed most of these—he tells a good story even though he insists on giving everybody's name—including the friend's neighbour and the neighbour's friend that someone in Malaya knows. But I did not learn as much as I had hoped to about the public affairs of New Zealand.

Perhaps Sir Jack is too much the prudent civil servant to really spill any beans, even well after retirement. He has very little to say about the politicians he dealt with, and writes about bureaucratic battles and animosities in a rather veiled manner. Personal feeling and candour are most evident when he writes about his rather bitter experience at the Defence Department just before his retirement. Sir Jack was given the task of integrating the three military services into a single department and, not surprisingly, ran into bitter opposition from some military quarters. His problems at Defence were compounded by his opposition to the Vietnam war, and eventually he felt driven to retire a year early to escape an uncomfortable situation. Historians may find this chapter one of the most useful, but even here Sir Jack by no means leaves the reader with the feeling he is telling all.

I came across only one obvious error in the book—Sir Walter Nash was not Leader of the Opposition in 1967 (p.151)—and would like to believe that the printing error which led to the *Primed* Minister's office on p.127 was a civil servant's Freudian slip.

Overall this is a readable but not very penetrating book by an able and

respected civil servant who is rather too decent to tell us everything we would like to know.

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Samuel Ironside in New Zealand, 1839-1858. By W. A. Chambers. Ray Richards, in association with the Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, Auckland, 1982. 284pp. illus. Price: \$30.00.

TODAY when all Pakeha are exhorted to repentance over the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in our history, this biography makes intriguing reading. Samuel Ironside signed the Treaty as a witness. He ended his New Zealand career as a Methodist minister in New Plymouth fully convinced of the rectitude of the settler viewpoint on Maori land. Those who view the past in relation to present-day concerns will find this the major puzzle of his life, though he was by no means unique in this sequence of belief. Those who follow the sackcloth-and-ashes school of historical interpretation will want to know what was so wicked about Samuel Ironside that led him to such conclusions. They will have little help from this book. It confirms the impression that Ironside was a plain, honest, reasonable man.

He is probably best known as the Cloudy Bay missionary who attempted to prevent the Wairau affray between the Nelson settlers and Te Rauparaha's party. He risked his life to bury the victims and produced a balanced report which helped ensure the authorities did not over-react. At this point he was the honest mediator between the races. But the episode ended his missionary career; thereafter he acted as a minister to settlers, with some Maori work, in Wellington, Nelson, and New Plymouth, finally departing for Tasmania. At this stage 'he considered that Selwyn's Maori predilections often led to the unjust condemnation of the settlers and the violent overbearing Maori had been excused and his excesses winked at'. (p.229).

The distinctive feature of this well-presented biography is the close identification of author and subject. Wesley Chambers is a Methodist minister and the book captures well the inner spirit and motivation of nineteenth-century Methodism. The disadvantage of this is the inward-looking quality of the book. There is thorough research, but it is largely limited to Methodist sources and the newspapers of the day. Thus the description of the Waitangi discussions is based on Ironside's later recollections and not checked against contemporary accounts which differ in several respects. Later, we are assured that there was in the 1850s a Maori Land League to prevent the sale of land, that it stemmed from Anglican influences and was supported by every non-Wesleyan Maori family from Otaki to Whitecliffs. This was firmly believed by Taranaki settlers at the time and no doubt the sources the author has used told him this. Historians such as Keith Sinclair and B. J. Dalton have been more sceptical. The book is primarily