

*The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750-1914*. Edited by R. A. Cage. Croom Helm, London, 1984. vi, 287 pp. UK price: £17.95.

SCOTLAND sustained higher emigration rates than most other European countries before and throughout the 'emigration century' (1815-1914). Between 1750 and 1914 the Scots also exhibited greater diversity with respect to emigration destinations than probably any other European (and certainly any other UK) national group. Scottish historians should therefore welcome the initiative of Bob Cage in launching *The Scots Abroad*, a book which seeks to identify the Scots' contribution to economic development in a variety of receiving countries, concentrating on the three important fields of labour, capital, and enterprise.

Apart from Roy Campbell's essay, 'Scotland', which sets the scene from the centre, and Bob Cage's own contribution, 'The Scots in England', the essays all deal with Scots who went to destinations outside Europe. David Macmillan provides an intriguing account of how British North America functioned as a 'Scottish commercial preserve, almost an informal empire' (p.48) in the eighteenth century; Bernard Aspinwall, by contrast, is more interested in the less 'tangible' aspects of Scottish experience in the nineteenth-century United States. Eric Richards for Australia and Tom Brooking for New Zealand provide essays of somewhat broader conceptual scope than most of the other contributors to the volume: they both recognize, for example, that adequate treatment of the given themes requires that the Scots discussed be distinguished from other ethnic groups. Latin America, an exciting and still largely unresearched territory, is ventured into by Manuel Fernandez, while Olive Checkland, in an informative essay on the Scots in Meiji Japan, and James G. Parker on India, consider areas where Scots were essentially sojourners 'on the make'.

All of the essays contain fresh insights and new information, but the reader will probably find some difficulty in trying to interpret each individual contribution. This is partly because the volume as a whole lacks editorial direction. It seems that the authors were given a fairly free rein within the broad scope of their topics, and consequently they approach their subject matter in different ways, often focusing on different periods. Macmillan's discussion, for example, is very limited for the period after 1815. This is a pity, because most Scottish emigration between the Napoleonic Wars and the Great Famine and during the early years of the twentieth century was directed towards the territories now known as 'Canada'.

Indeed, a general imprecision about numbers and consistently weak treatment of the 'labour' theme are striking features of the book. Most of the essays provide information about Scotsmen who succeeded or failed in the mercantile world, who introduced new industries and new technologies, and who promoted developments in politics and education. There are references to Scottish investment and Scottish banking, but no apparent recognition of recent work on international labour migration, and only one or two acknowledgements that Scottish women also went abroad. These perspectives possibly reflect the lack of current interest amongst Scottish demographers and economic historians in studies of Scottish emigration and economic activity overseas. Campbell's essay, for example, tends to write off emigration as a solution for those who had 'failed' in industrializing Scotland. His emphatic statement that the occupations and regional origins of emigrants cannot be known indicates that as yet there exists no comprehensive, comparable, quantitative

framework against which destination-specific studies of the Scottish diaspora can be set. It is then perhaps not surprising that only two contributors to the volume — Brooking (for New Zealand) and Richards (for Australia) — attempt to say anything precise about the numbers and social origins of the vast majority of immigrant Scots in their respective countries.

Of all the essayists, Richards has the most detailed acquaintance with and control over his subject, as well as the subtlest appreciation of both the limitations and potential of his themes. At the outset he declares that his chapter is 'not so much a celebration of the Scottish influence on Australia, as a commentary on the Scots as representative elements in the process of colonisation and the making of Australia' (p.112). This is a helpful approach for the reader, who is provided with a clear framework and lucid argument without having to scrutinize layers of rhetoric to grasp the key issues. Richards identifies the extent, nature, and timing of Scottish settlement, capital investment, and enterprise, with Australian economic development providing the key organizing concept. Whether elucidating the complementary role of Scottish capital, ownership and managerial drive in the western Port Phillip district, or subtly appraising the Weber thesis with reference to colonial society, or specifying the unique ways in which Scottish sayings were harnessed to colonial enterprise, Richards' discussion is precise, acute and comprehensive. He is also far more aware of contemporaneous developments in Scotland than most of the other essayists.

Brooking is a less cautious commentator than Richards. In a preliminary section of his chapter 'Tam McCanny and Kitty Clydeside — the Scots in New Zealand', Brooking states that the social and geographic origins of these Scots can be 'established with some degree of certainty' (p.159). He then presents unpublished data on the county origins of Scots emigrating to Otago between 1848 and 1860, and to New Zealand during the Vogel era, with some limited aggregative data on occupations. Unfortunately he has no comparable information for other peak periods of Scottish emigration to New Zealand, in particular 1841-2, and during the American Civil War/Otago gold rush years, when about one-third of all Scots emigrating to all destinations were bound for New Zealand, and over 50% of all UK immigrants arriving in New Zealand were Scots.

Brooking does not make it clear whether he is discussing place of last residence or place of birth, and his understanding of the Scottish economic and social context from whence his emigrants came is sometimes crude. For example, he does not comprehend the penetration of the Free Church in the North-West Highlands at mid-century: he equates 'Highlanders' with Roman Catholicism (p.163). Brooking has not always used the original sources himself, so the results he presents are not as useful as they might have been. There is no way we can know from the Vogel lists as they stand whether emigrants came from urban or rural areas, and Highlanders only appear as 'nearly all single young men' (p.162) because all twelve years of age and over were put in single persons' quarters and recorded separately from their families on the lists. There were also high proportions of 'single young women' from the Highlands, although Highland emigrants were in fact characterized by large families emigrating at a mature stage of the life cycle.

The disturbing aspect of Brooking's essay is his tendency to present what are often inaccurate surmises as verifiable conclusions based on data. For example, he claims that amongst early Otago settlers artisans were under-represented 'despite the efforts of the immigration agents' (p.160). To anyone with any familiarity with the shipping lists this would seem a surprising statement. 'Artisans' were at the very least

'well-represented' with reference to their proportions in the sending population, while the first priority of the agents (before the New Zealand Company's ultimate demise) was to find land purchasers, and amongst the candidates for free and assisted passages agricultural labourers were preferred. It seems unlikely that emigrants 'certainly inflated their occupations upon departure to avoid stigmatism' (p.160), when deflating their occupations (and their ages) would be the likely course to obtain passage assistance.

Brooking contributes to this volume a colourful account of many individual Scots and Scots-backed ventures in New Zealand, and provides a useful synopsis of much unpublished student and local history work. In the 'Capital' and 'Entrepreneurship' sections Brooking shows what a keen and meticulous Scot-detector he has been. He identifies and explains connections between Scots-born promoters, directors, managers, and key shareholders, and gives an idea of the scope and nature of their activities and enterprise. It seems that Scots were 'prominent' or 'well-represented' at most levels of New Zealand commercial and manufacturing life, and 'over-represented' as politicians, educators, and in the rural sphere.

The 1905 Land Commission, 1882 List of Freeholders, and the *New Zealand Cyclopaedia* are Brooking's key sources. Reflecting these, his chapter distinguishes two main categories of Scots involved in New Zealand's economic development to 1914. Most prominent are the commercial and professional men, located most obviously in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and over-represented in the colonial sphere amongst run-holders, estate-owners, and the directors of corporate finance. Secondly, there is a rather vague group of people — farmer, son of tenant farmer, crofter, shepherd whose origins are not clearly defined and who, Brooking claims (p.174), seldom experienced 'spectacular upwards social mobility', at least in rural Otago. The vast majority of Scots whose occupations were given on New Zealand shipping lists, such as skilled craftsmen (especially building tradesmen) and agricultural labourers, emerge infrequently in Brooking's discussion of Scottish capital and entrepreneurship, and are ousted in the 'Labour' section by a limited investigation of the role of 'Kitty Clydeside'. In his introduction and the section on origins, Brooking claims that most Scots in New Zealand were of humble birth, yet it would seem from the subsequent discussion that the majority of those who made any impact were relatively well-off, by both New Zealand and UK standards. This renders Brooking's central theme that the Scots provided the vanguard of land and social reforms in late nineteenth-century New Zealand because they were motivated by a 'complex dialogue between class background . . . and ethnic character', and fired because as 'a people they had suffered more from the abuses of landlordism than the English' (p.185), somewhat unconvincing. Still it is an interesting idea, and Brooking must be congratulated for the scope of his concerns, and for having raised issues apparently not perceived by other contributors to this volume.

It is disappointing that *The Scots Abroad* is a book which represents little more than the sum of its parts. The experiences of the vast majority of Scots who left their native land, precision as to 'who' they were, and the nature of their contributions to developing world economics are still unresolved issues. In one important way, however, this volume and its editor clearly succeed. *The Scots Abroad* has provided a convincing demonstration that renewed dialogue is required between Scottish historians and historians with Scottish interests domiciled abroad.

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