

latter would have grounds to feel libelled. But I am sure Govor is right to suggest that the ongoing unpleasantness aboard the *Nadezdha* and the *Neva* was nudged into crisis by the Marquesan sojourn. Not, as Govor suggests, because in 'coming to this island to observe savages, they had discovered the savage within themselves', but rather because bids for prestige and legitimacy on both sides of the beach became both more contestable and more critical in the moment of encounter. I wonder what the late Greg Denning would make of these additions to an island history he had explored so often and so well? I expect, under all these murmurs of mutiny, he would have discerned the ambiguity of authority and heard from afar Tsar Alexander's bad language.

ALEX CALDER

The University of Auckland

A Great New Zealand Prime Minister? Reappraising William Ferguson Massey. Edited by James Watson and Lachy Paterson. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2011. 172pp. NZ price: \$40. ISBN: 9781877578076.

SINCE COLLECTIONS OF CONFERENCE PAPERS are often a disappointment, it is a real pleasure to review a volume that is coherent, well organised and thought provoking. Drawing on papers delivered at the 2006 Massey@Massey conference held at Massey University in Palmerston North, *A Great New Zealand Prime Minister?* presents nine essays that examine different aspects of the life and political career of William Ferguson Massey. Each of these contributions is different in focus and approach, but together they provide a convincing case for a thorough reconsideration of the way that historians have judged Bill Massey.

The opening chapter by Erik Olssen makes a major contribution to the book's success. Olssen examines his own interest in, and engagement with, Massey and charts the ways his views of the former New Zealand prime minister and his government have evolved over the course of his academic career. Interestingly, Olssen uses his knowledge of US history to place Massey in a wider historical context, suggesting that 'only in a society with a political culture as radical as New Zealand's ... could Massey and his government be described as conservative, let alone reactionary' (p.15). In place of the commonly held image of a close-minded and intolerant conservative, Massey emerges from Olssen's survey as a more humane, far-sighted and progressive political leader, whose significance domestically and on the international stage ought to be better appreciated. Indeed, for Olssen, Massey's economic and social policies during World War I foreshadowed a range of later Labour government measures. Linda Bryder's insightful chapter on Christina Massey lends additional weight to this appreciation, observing that in its support for the Plunket Society, the Reform government was in fact 'sponsoring a universal health and welfare system' for new mothers (p.45).

Subsequent essays in this volume tend to confirm Olssen's positive evaluation of Massey's achievements and support the case for a thorough reconsideration of his place in New Zealand historiography. Miles Fairburn and S.J. Haslett examine Massey's electoral achievements and conclude that the Reform Party enjoyed more widespread support than conventionally acknowledged: 'the vote for Massey in 1911 and 1914 was remarkably broad-spectrum, and it did not reflect the acute divisions that supposedly characterized the period' (p.74). Likewise, Rory Sweetman shows that Massey's political career and, more specifically, his attitudes towards Roman Catholics defy the simplistic assertions of religious bigotry that have sometimes been made on account of his association with the Orange Order. Massey's own sense of identity and engagement with issues of national

identity and religion were much more complex and shaped significantly by ideas of empire and 'Britishness'. Jock Phillips's examination of Massey's Ulster background and migration to New Zealand casts light on the foundations of Massey's own identity and political viewpoints. In his chapter, Brad Patterson shows the centrality of freehold land tenure to Massey's political outlook; Ashley Gould's chapter on repatriation and land settlement for Māori soldiers after the Great War reaffirms this importance and challenges the body of scholarship that suggests Māori ex-servicemen were denied opportunities for repatriation assistance available to Pākehā. In other contributions Glyn Harper re-evaluates Massey's relationship with soldiers at the front, while James Watson examines Massey's role in the promotion of New Zealand trade.

This volume raises many questions, not the least why Massey and his Reform government have fared so poorly for so long in New Zealand historiography. It also highlights the inattention to Bill Massey's presence on the world stage — as Erik Olssen points out, with the exception of Massey, all British Empire prime ministers involved in the post World War I peace settlement process have been the subject of several biographies by professional historians.

A Great New Zealand Prime Minister? is an interesting contribution to scholarship on early-twentieth-century New Zealand politics and deserves to be widely read. Whether that will be possible remains to be seen. If the binding of the review copy (which was unable to withstand one thorough reading) is symptomatic of the production run as a whole, then regrettably this book will not survive long on library shelves!

MALCOLM CAMPBELL

The University of Auckland

William Hughes: Australia. By Carl Bridge. Haus Publishing, London, 2011. 201pp. NZ price: \$30.00. ISBN 978-1- 905791-90-3.

W. F. Massey: New Zealand. By James Watson. Haus Publishing, London, 2011. 209 pp. NZ price: \$30.00. ISBN 978-1- 905794-83-5.

IN JUNE 2009 a significant ninetieth commemoration date passed with scarcely a mention in either Australia or New Zealand. On 28 June 1919, in the Hall of Mirrors at the grand palace of Versailles built by Louis XIV, the treaty ending the war with Germany was signed. It had taken six months of serious negotiations and not a little horse-trading to reach the point where this treaty could be signed. Some nations like China, upset at the loss of Shantung to Japan, refused to sign. The Treaty of Versailles was a significant world event and this compromise peace treaty would be unfairly blamed for the tragic path the twentieth century followed after 1919. In Europe and the United Kingdom, the ninetieth anniversary of the Paris Peace Conference and the treaty signing at Versailles received considerably more attention. Part of this commemoration included a 32-volume series entitled *Makers of the Modern World* by Haus Publishing. The aim of the series is to describe the personalities, events and circumstances surrounding the peacemaking process. It does so by examining the standpoint of key players from the 32 different countries involved in the peace talks. A volume of the series analyses the contribution of William Hughes from Australia and another does the same for William Massey of New Zealand.

The author of *William Hughes: Australia* is Professor Carl Bridge, head of the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies at King's College, London. Professor Bridge has written or contributed to numerous books on Australian and international history, including *Australians in Britain: The Twentieth-Century Experience* (2009), *Between Empire and Nation: Australia's External Relations from Federation to the Second World War* (2001) and *The British World Diaspora: Culture and Identity* (2003).