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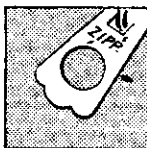
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BOOK REVIEWS (Cont'd.)

impiously insisted on regarding soap as merely soap and toothpaste as toothpaste."

The great pity about this book is that the author did not make a more positive contribution in a field where our need of guidance is so urgent. Perhaps it is to be the subject of a future book. His last chapter encourages this hope. And he ends, "Australia needs . . . a more intelligent mastery of social engineering. The road is hard because it leads uphill."

—J.D.McD.

THE NEAR NORTH

THE BIRTH OF INDONESIA. By David Wehl. Allen and Unwin. English price, 15/-.

THE history of the Dutch in the East Indies has been something like the history of the British in India. It began with a trading company, that gradually acquired political rights for the protection of trade; about a hundred years ago the company was superseded by the government of Holland, which was content to leave many of the old native rulers in their place under Dutch supervision; and finally the opportunities provided for higher education have created a fairly numerous class of westernised Indonesians, who have in the western manner grown discontented with alien rule and have organised a movement for Indonesian independence. According to Mr. Wehl, this movement did not take a very deep hold of the great mass of the people—the peasants—but it was strong in the towns; and its strength was increased by the propaganda of the Japanese, who for three and a-half years used every modern device of propaganda to persuade the people that the Japanese were engaged in recovering Asia for the Asiatics. When the Japanese surrendered, the nationalists stepped into their shoes; and, when, after a long delay, the Dutch reappeared, they had to deal with an organised government that was deeply entrenched at any rate in Java and Sumatra, supported by captured Japanese arms and large numbers of enthusiastic young Indonesians, inspired (in Mr. Wehl's words) by "a mixture of fear, hatred, idealism, fanaticism, patriotism, a frank delight in shooting and looting and a sincere and indomitable striving for independence." Against this, at any rate in Java and Sumatra, the Dutch made little headway by discussion and compromise. After two years of this they made very great concessions to nationalist demands and agreed to recognise a republican government, governing Java and Madura and Sumatra, as part of a federation of Indonesian states under the Dutch crown; but the republicans demanded the whole of Indonesia, and the Dutch decided to settle the dispute by force. In a brief campaign they had a sweeping success—the peasants giving no general aid to the republicans—which was interrupted by the intervention of the United Nations. That is as far as Mr.

Wehl takes the matter. He has written a well-informed and fair-minded book which deserves to be widely read.

—Harold Miller

MYTHS AND CONTENTIONS

THE TREATY OF WAITANGI AND THE ACQUISITION OF BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY IN NEW ZEALAND, 1840. By J. Rutherford. Price, 2/6.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEMES IN THE MODERN NOVEL. By S. Musgrove. Price, 2/- Auckland University College.

THAT rich comedy of good intentions, high-minded officials delegating teasing tasks to a naval officer untrained in law or politics, hurrying on, hugging, mugging, to prevent the wicked settlers contaminating the Maoris, to prevent the noble Maoris being taken down by the land-sharks (or taking them down), lesser officials with axes to grind (even Hobson: a Lieutenant-Governor's salary was double that of a Consul), missionaries protecting their spiritual children, the Maoris, but providing for their physical children with Maori land; when will this, the fantastic story of the acquisition of New Zealand by the British Crown, ever be adequately told? Professor Rutherford does not tell it; but he has nailed down some parts of the story and has diligently sought the precise legal moment of the beginnings of British sovereignty. For him the date is May 21, 1840. He does not intend any critical assessment of character. What a muddler Hobson was



could hardly be deduced from these scholarly pages.

Professor Rutherford, although he has a wholesome respect for it, points out the weaknesses of the Treaty of Waitangi. No one—except perhaps in a passing mood of centennial bombast—can contemplate the Treaty with any satisfaction. It was the salve to Secretary Stephen's delicate conscience without which Lord Normanby and he would not have permitted New Zealand to be annexed (a word Professor Rutherford is very shy of using). How soon did this solemn undertaking become the "praiseworthy device for amusing . . . savages." By 1843 even Stephen was vigorously quelling Attorney-General Swainson's notion that sovereignty might be fragmentary, because important chiefs had never signed the Treaty. No, the whole of New Zealand had been taken by the Queen. "Admit, if it must be so, that this was ill advised, unjust, a breach of faith, and so on. . . . That a subordinate officer should attempt to set such claims aside on his private judgment of what is prudent, or what is right, seems to me utterly inadmissible. My opinion is that this is a controversy to be repressed with a strong hand. . . ." It is ironic that, when we celebrated our Centennial in 1940, it was the sacred Treaty which was exalted—as though it had ever been honoured—and the subordinate officer who gave any too realistic account of what happened in 1840 was likely to be repressed with a strong hand. The

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