

AN ATLAS FOR NEW ZEALANDERS

SIXTEEN years ago the Department of Internal Affairs, whose under-secretary was then Joseph Heenan, obtained Government approval for "certain proposals" in connection with the national centennial celebrations of 1940. They were for the production of historical publications, "including an atlas to contain both an historical and a modern section, a Dictionary of National Biography, a series of short historical surveys, and a supplementary series of pictorial surveys." The atlas alone of these four centennial projects was not completed, although work continued on it, despite wartime interruptions, until quite recently.

Last month Sir William Bodkin, the Minister of Internal Affairs, announced that a special committee had examined the project and reported that no further work should be done on it. Instead, it recommended the production of a reference atlas which, while containing maps of contemporary data, would at the same time indicate the progressive development of New Zealand. In addition, the committee said, a series of historical maps could with advantage be produced from time to time. The Government has now appointed a New Zealand Atlas Committee to produce what is to be called the *Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand*, the general editor of which will be the parliamentary historian, Dr. A. H. McLintock. The new atlas will be a sizeable volume of about 200 pages. It will contain something like 40 pages of colour maps, 24 pages of black and white maps, 20 pages of illustrations and 64 pages of letterpress, and a number of introductory pages. The size will be ten inches by twelve.

The lack of an atlas has long been regarded as a serious gap in New Zealand scholarship, and the proposed *Descriptive Atlas* should do something to fill this gap and, in the words of Sir William Bodkin, "prove of inestimable value to the people of New Zealand." Sir William also said that the new atlas would "embody the general principles laid down for the centennial atlas, namely, to provide within the limits set by cartography and historical research a comprehensive record of New Zealand's development from the beginning of its known history to the present."

The committee which will supervise the production of the *Descriptive Atlas* consists of the Surveyor-General (R. G. Dick), the Government Printer (R. E. Owen), the Turnbull Librarian (C. R. H. Taylor), representing the Internal Affairs Department, Dr. McLintock (parliamentary historian), and F. A. Simpson, representing the New Zealand Geographical Society. The committee has the power to co-opt others, such as educational authorities, as required. The atlas, it is estimated, will take three years to complete, and in its compilation the maps will be built around the letterpress, although certain basic maps will stand independently. From this point of view much depends on the work done by Mr. Simpson, who has been commissioned to do the letterpress in consulta-

tion with other geographical and allied experts.

The general composition of the colour section of the atlas is expected to be something like the following: Regional areas, 16 pages; outlying islands and dependencies, four pages; farming, four pages; discovery and exploration, soil, geology, vegetation, industry, trade, population, communications, two pages each; climate, one page. There will also be maps of New Zealand in the world and New Zealand in the Pacific. The maps will be drawn by the Lands and Survey Department, and the printing will be done by the Government Printing Office. Most of the maps will be on a scale of one to a million, although some will have to be on a smaller scale than this.

The historical sections will incorporate much of the material already prepared for the centennial atlas. The remainder of this material, including many files of research papers and a number of partly-drawn historical maps, will be preserved in the archives of the Turnbull Library. Here it will be sorted and indexed, and the maps put in good

physical condition for preservation. The written material may also be bound for better preservation. All of the material will then be made available to approved post-graduate students of the university who are engaged in research work.

Sir Joseph Heenan's pioneer attempt to produce a first-rate historical atlas failed largely because the amount of original research work involved made it impossible to complete the project in time for the centennial. The Internal Affairs Department decided to carry on with the work after the centennial, but when researchers and draughtsmen were swallowed up in military tasks during the war the scheme languished. Research was carried on after the war under the guidance of Dr. J. C. Beaglehole, who had become head of the Department's historical branch, but the atlas never really recovered from the set-back it suffered during the war.

The original proposal to produce the centennial atlas came from the former Surveyor-General (H. E. Walsh), and Professor James Rutherford, of Auckland University College. Dr. J. W. Davidson was appointed to begin full-



SIR JOSEPH HEENAN
War frustrated his pioneering

time work on the atlas in 1938, but in about August of that year he left the country and the work was carried on by M. I. R. Burnett (subsequently appointed secretary of the atlas committee), under E. H. McCormick, then secretary of the National Centennial Historical Committee. Mr. Burnett left for military service during the war, but returned to take over the work in 1946. He resigned from the project in 1951.

One reason why the centennial atlas scheme has now been allowed to lapse is that technical skills of mapping have so changed in recent years, even in such matters as lettering, that those maps which had already been completed would have had to be redone. Costs of draughting and printing have also greatly increased in recent years, while sales of such an atlas would probably be lower now than the interest stimulated by the centennial has faded.

The four centennial publications were offered for sale to subscribers at an advance "package" price of ten guineas, of which the atlas price was three guineas, and the 50 people who paid this advance subscription are being refunded their money. The new *Descriptive Atlas* is being budgeted for at a retail price of around 32/6, and an edition of some 12,000 will probably be printed.



F. A. SIMPSON

An estimated three years' work lies ahead



DR. A. H. McLINTOCK

Spencer Digby photograph

Troy and the Flood

DID the Flood really happen? Was there a siege of Troy? Are these well-known and well-loved stories legends or are they only myths?

Last year the BBC broadcast a series of talks by archaeologists, scholars and others about the Flood, Troy, Knossos, Tara and other famous events and places of the past which tried to decide what was pure invention—mythical—on the one hand and what, on the other, was to some extent historical—or legendary. The first two of these programmes have been received on transcription by the NZBS and are to be broadcast from National stations, starting with "The Flood," which will be heard from 3YC at 8.24 p.m. on Monday, March 22.

Sir Leonard Woolley, the eminent archaeologist, who is known to a wide circle of readers for such books as *Ur of the Chaldees* and *Digging Up the Past*,

is probably better qualified than anyone else to say what is known about the Flood. Until a few generations ago, he points out, the story was accepted as historical fact because it was part of the Bible. Then believers had two shocks: scholars discovered that Genesis was a composite narrative, and archaeologists unearthed clay tablets on which were written another version of the Flood story. Since this new, Sumerian version was written before the time of Abraham, it was not Hebrew in origin at all, but a pagan legend—so why should we for a moment suppose that it was true? That is how Sir Leonard starts off; and he goes on to examine the rest of the evidence and to tell his story of the excavations he



conducted at Ur and the discoveries he made there. He ends by saying exactly what he thinks is the basis of the Flood of Sumerian legend and Biblical story.

Until the middle of the 19th Century the story of the siege of Troy was known only through the *Iliad*, the oldest and among the greatest works in European literature. In his talk about Troy in *Myth or Legend?* Denys Page, Professor of Greek at Cambridge University, tells how Heinrich Schliemann, serving for 18 hours a day in his father's shop, dreamed about the famous city and made a fortune so that he could go and look for it. The learned world was vastly amused when he began to dig, but he found nine cities of Troy, layer upon layer—though, as Professor Page goes on to say, it was left to someone else to find the Troy of the *Iliad* after Schliemann died. "Troy" will be heard from 1YC at 8.0 p.m. on Monday, March 29.

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 19, 1954.