

the conviction that his magnificent achievement was marred by lack of co-operation.

The book has good appendices, including advice on Hunza porters. The copy reviewed was paper-backed without colour plates, and the production of the finished book cannot be judged. The publishers have compared its importance to that of Annapurna and Everest. I am certain that the writing of *Nanga Parbat*, as translated, is inferior to that of Hertzog in *Annapurna*, and that as leader Dr. Herrligkoffer lacked the qualities of Sir John Hunt, who generously gave a foreword to his book.

THE QUEEN'S PEACE

THE HOME OFFICE, by Sir Frank Newsam; Allen and Unwin, English price 15/-.

BECAUSE the Home Secretary is the residuary legatee among the Queen's Ministers, it is often thought that his department is a sort of rag-bag. But despite the usual British lack of logic, the functions of the Home Office are closely knit and unified. Apart from the Home Secretary's purely secretarial function of posting up notices announcing Royal births and deaths, he has two primary duties—keeping the Queen's Peace and carrying out the Royal Prerogative of Mercy. In addition, statute law has conferred on him certain powers and functions that relate to these duties.

The Queen's Peace covers the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of the liberties of the subject. The Prerogative of Mercy relates to the treatment of offenders. Specifically, the first function covers the police, the fire service, civil defence, child welfare, public well-being and safety, the control of aliens and naturalisation; the second includes the Royal pardon, the administration of justice, the probation service and the Prison Commission. In addition, the Home Office supervises the work for some of the social commissions of the United Nations and many tasks which roughly cover what is done by our own Internal Affairs Department. In fact, the Home Office embraces what in New Zealand are part of the functions of the following departments: Police, Prisons, Justice, Internal Affairs, External Affairs, Labour, Education and Legislative.

The work is written by the Permanent Under-Secretary for the Home Department and expresses no personal opinions. Its style is clear and there is some understatement. As well as being the last word in authority, the book is easy to read. It should find its way on to the shelf of many a lawyer, as well, of course, of those interested in public administration in a law-abiding parliamentary democracy. It is to be hoped that the others of the series—in preparation—on the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and so on, are equally urbane and enlightening. —W.B.S.

"WHITE SPOT"

THE WHITE DESERT: the official account of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition, by John Gjaever; Chatto and Windus, English price 25/-.

FOR several reasons this book will rank high in polar literature. The exploration in 1949-1952 of the "white spot" on the Antarctic known as Queen Maud Land, opposite our Ross Sea, was undertaken jointly by three countries. The party spent two winters at headquarters on the sea-ice, with no absolute assurance that their foundation would hold, and made thrusts southwards, one of which produced the longest sledge journey on record—five and a half months. The scientific results were important.

The narrative of the leader, John Gjaever, a veteran of Norwegian polar

work (which is supplemented by reports from the sledging parties) is exceptionally well written. It is a lively, highly judicious and readable blend of action, scientific interest, and human relationships, including humour. The spirit of this wise and very observant leader shines through the easy, perfectly natural English of the translator, E. M. Huggard.

The smooth success of this Norwegian-British-Swedish venture is an admirable object lesson in international co-operation. Men from the party were the first to set foot on the land of this almost unknown quadrant. Scientific work went on all the time at the base, and during the two summers parties went out with dog teams and motor sledges, and in the air. It was a motor sledge that caused the tragedy of the expedition; by going over an edge of ice it drowned three men.

The chief practical interest in the scientists' work lies in meteorology and glaciology. The Antarctic is profoundly important in relation to the world's weather and climate. What will be the effects if the vast ice masses substantially diminish? By new methods these scientists plumbed ice up to 7800 feet deep over land. In one spot it was calculated that if the 6500 feet of ice were removed, the ocean would flow into a fiord 2000 feet deep!

The book is packed with interesting facts about ways of living in the Antarctic, and is well illustrated.

—A.M.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL

THE STRANGER IN IRELAND, by Constantia Maxwell; Jonathan Cape, English price 25/-.

AS I was submitted in my schooldays to teachers obsessed with "the woes of holy Ireland," I have ever since, in reaction, been completely indifferent to Irish history. Perhaps, too, what seems a persistent Irish tendency to judge contemporary situations in the light of what happened centuries ago has made me still less sympathetic to catalogues of Hibernian miseries. In any case, I didn't expect to be as absorbed and moved as I have been by this unusually fine recreation of Irish history from Elizabeth's reign to the Great Famine.

Its impact is greater because it is not anti-Partition propaganda or historical special pleading, but a scholarly and judiciously balanced study. Dr. Maxwell, formerly Professor of Modern History at Dublin University, has summarised the assessments of German, French, Italian and English visitors to Ireland, elaborated and commented on them, and set them in the wider context of each century's history. It is not an anthology, but a re-seeing of Eire's past, with the aid of observers, sympathetic and unsympathetic, dispassionate and prejudiced, from the "planted" Spenser and the adventurous Essex to Johann Kohl and Thackeray. Some viewed more perceptively than others the disintegrating culture of a land wasted by war and famine and exploited by England. Dr. Maxwell's shrewd character-study of each visitor reveals what factors conditioned his attitude and enables us to judge more exactly the value of his observations.

The result is a fascinating book. Perhaps the author's historical introductions, covering more broadly the same ground as the strangers do, make for some repetition. At the same time, she writes with such a wealth of human understanding that the book is not only a graphic popular history of Ireland, but

(continued on next page)



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an antiseptic "safe",
what do you mean exactly?*

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less automatically, aren't they?*

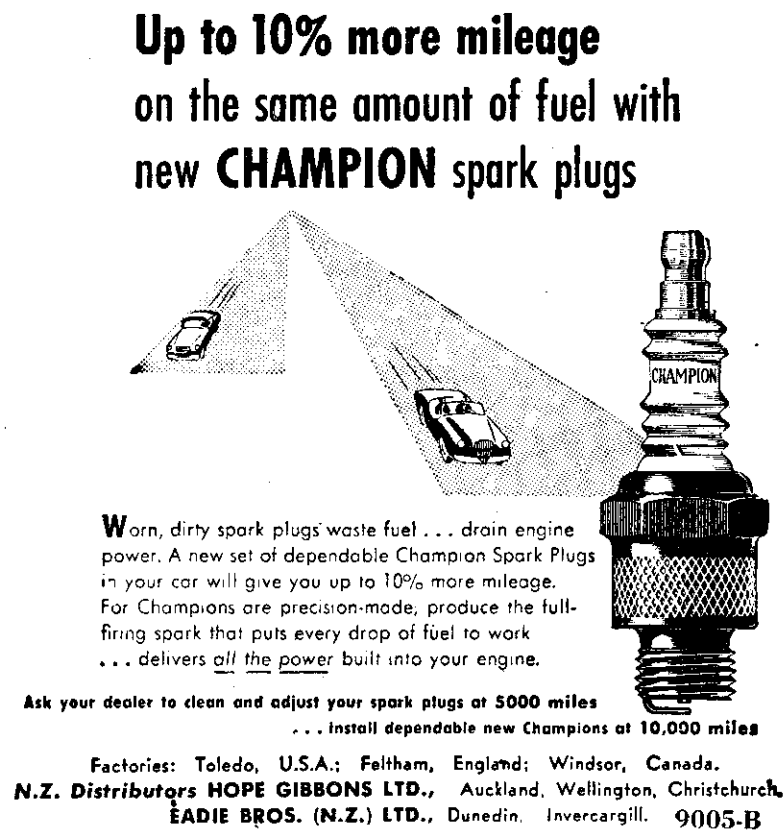
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