

BOOKS

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Cell 2455, *Death Row*, falls naturally into two parts. The first is a unique self-portrait of a criminal psychopath and, as the book itself confirms, a vicious narcissist and pathological liar. It is tautly, almost professionally, written and, if it were presented as fiction, would make a better than average thriller of the American pulp variety. For the rest, this book is a highly emotional indictment of a society which spawns an ever-widening cesspool of juvenile delinquents and tolerates a vast underworld of criminals, under the comfortable but demonstrably false illusion that "crime does not pay." (Chessman

quotes *Time* magazine's report of an F.B.I. statement that only 13 per cent of the nation's criminals ever wind up in gaol.) Incidentally, proponents of capital punishment will find here nothing to report, and much to refute, the thesis that the death penalty is a deterrent to murder.

Quentin Reynolds, the author of *Police Headquarters*, is the apotheosis, if the gods will forgive me for using the word in such a context, of the hack writer. As a life member of Mr. Reynolds's fraternity, I respect his talent for potboiling reportage, but deplore his current panegyric on the New York Police Department as being well below his standard. If I were you, I should forget it.

—Henry Walter

WAR IN THE AIR

NEW ZEALANDERS WITH THE ROYAL AIR FORCE: Volume II, by Wing Commander H. L. Thompson; War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs.

THE second volume of this section of the Official War History deals with the European theatre between January, 1943, and May, 1945. With 446 pages of text, 37 pages of appendices, 62 photographs and 17 diagrams, it is a volume of considerable size.

It would be impossible to maintain chronological order over so wide a front. Wing Commander Thompson has therefore divided his subject into types of operation—fighters, bombers, transport, and so on—and has then told the story of each group between the time limits previously mentioned. This gives anyone reading the book from end to end

BOOK SHOP

IN the Book Shop session on Wednesday, October 24, Major-General Howard Kippenburger will review "Blamey," by John Hetherington. Rhoda Bloodworth, of Auckland, will review the Beatrice Webb Diaries, edited by Margaret Lane. Margaret Dunningham, of Dunedin, will review three novels: "The Gallons Tree," by Bela Just; "Your Daughter Iris," by Jerome Weidman; and "An Episode of Sparrows," by Rumer Godden.

a feeling of making the same journey time after time, but by a different route. This is not intended as a criticism; the author's job was to write a comprehensive history and not an easy-to-read story. The most direct appeal will undoubtedly be to those who took some part in the operations.

At this distance in time and space from the events described, reading the history produces some odd, almost nostalgic feelings, especially when viewed against the background of knowledge which is currently available about the present state of the art of waging war. To quote an example: In the chapter dealing with Bomber Command it is stated that in the space of just over one week, four night raids each by more than 700 aircraft were launched, and over 8500 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped. If the number of bombers is multiplied by the average crew, and added to that are the manhours used in building and maintaining the aircraft, engines, equipment, etc., it will be appreciated that to drop 8500 tons on the enemy required an almost unbelievable amount of human effort. We are now told that nuclear weapons have reached the stage when one bomb dropped by one crew from one aircraft can produce an explosion equivalent to something like 100 times that amount.

Similar development has taken place in other branches, so that one is left with the feeling that Wing Commander Thompson's chronicle could well be one of the last records of human gallantry and sacrifice in making war, and that any future record will be of scientific, impersonal operations in which human fortitude will probably be required for taking rather than making war.

Copious biographical notes, and photographs of a higher standard of reproduction than in the first volume, add to the value of an excellently produced reference work.

—B.C.

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Music from Canada

SOME of Canada's leading orchestras, composers, conductors and performers in the field of popular music will be heard in a programme entitled *Canadian Showcase*, which is to begin shortly on all Commercial stations on Sunday afternoons. The series was made by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and all the selections and artists included are heard regularly on Canadian radio and television programmes. Four of the programmes consist of French Canadian traditional songs, sung in French by Estelle Caron and Lucille Dumont, and accompanied by Henry Mathews and his orchestra. The rest range from pleasant light orchestral music to well-written, strict jazz. Orchestra leaders, who have also each composed several of the songs heard are Albert Pratz, Denny Vaughan and Lou Snider, and the programmes are introduced and presented by Henry Ramer. The series will begin at 22B on October 28.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 19, 1956.