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Books

THE ALIEN SETTLER

FROM EUROPE TO NEW ZEALAND: An Account of Our Continental European Settlers, by R. A. Lochore; A. H. and A. W. Reed, in conjunction with the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs; 10/6.

(Reviewed by Alan Mulgan)

NEW ZEALAND has needed a book like this. Our alien immigration is as old as our British sovereignty, yet, according to the author and the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, in his introduction, this is the first published study of our alien groups. Fortunately, after lagging behind other countries, New Zealand has found an exceptionally well qualified investigator. Dr. Lochore knows the subject from both ends. He studied in Europe, travelled widely and learned languages, and after the war was for some years Naturalisation Officer with the Department of Internal Affairs. Into 110 pages he has packed a remarkable amount of fact and comment—statistics, analysis of historical origins and characteristics, what aliens do here and think, our attitude to them, and what our policy should be. But the packing is done with such literary skill that one is never bogged or bored. Dr. Lochore has decided opinions, and expresses them with pungency and wit. The record is rather weak on the cultural side, for almost all that is said is contained in a brief tribute to the 1939-41 refugees, but I am sure this is solely due to lack of space.

Dr. Lochore knows the value of the human illustration. The start of Italian fishing in Wellington from a sailor who was put ashore with a broken leg and, liking the place, recruited a vessel's crew one by one from his homeland; the unhappiness of a Greek qualified accountant because he has to keep a fish-shop; the refugee who was taken away to found a new industry in another Dominion because he got no encouragement to do so here—these things are more impressive than figures. New Zealand has always preferred northern European immigrants to southern, but there has been a swing away from the north, which has made assimilation more difficult. Greeks and Italians do not necessarily wish to be restaurateurs; many would go on the land (as some Italians have done) if they could get it.

The largest group of immigrants, says Dr. Lochore, has come from Germany, and (referring to the second war) "our old-settled Germans have a better war record than many of the alien groups who were supposed to be our allies." However, in his criticism of these other groups, he is sympathetic; part of the responsibility lies with New Zealanders, who have done nothing to assimilate them. His conclusion is that, whether we like it or not, we must make room for people of all sorts, for our own and the general good. Aliens must not be allowed to set up exclusive communities, but it would do us no harm if some day Croatian was spoken as commonly as Maori in the Northland, provided perfect English went with it. But, one may ask, how much Maori will be spoken there in fifty years?

Those who dislike foreigners on principle should be among the readers of

this book. Unfortunately, the stronger the xenophobia, the less likely is the victim to read it.

THEORIES OF PROPERTY

PRIVATE PROPERTY, the History of an Idea, by Richard Schlatter; George Allen and Unwin. English price, 18/-.

JOHN HEKE summed up the Maori view on land and private property in his statement, "God made this country for us. It cannot be sliced; if it were a whale it might be sliced." Paul, in explaining the ideas on property of the first Christians in Jerusalem wrote: "They had all things common . . . and the distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." In each of these examples the value of a society is described by its property relations.

As property relations change, so do theories about property. St. Augustine advised the early Christians not to own property and said there would be no private property in Paradise; but the Western church of the 13th Century existed in countries where it was the worldly authority. "Thus it was," says the author of this book, "that St. Thomas Aquinas . . . came to think that property and the political authority that protected it were not necessary evils but natural and good."

Luther and other leaders of the Reformation condemned the monks, not for owning property, but for not using it in an economically productive way. They said property should not be used to relieve men of the necessity of working, but as a tool to make more goods. This is why economic historians have said that the Reformation gave the necessary theoretical (and religious) sanction to the development of a new form of society—Capitalism; and when, after the English Revolution by the 17th Century middle-class against feudal privilege, John Locke wrote that it was a man's natural right to own what he had made, the political thinkers of the next century easily accepted it, as in fact did the socialists later.

This book is a short but skilled survey of the principal Western theories of private ownership from the Greeks onwards and should be read before there is any more discussion on the subject.

—W. B. Sutch

GOOD NEWS FOR GARDENERS?

THE WEED PROBLEM—a New Approach, by F. C. King; Faber and Faber. English price, 8/6.

MR. KING is in charge of gardens in Westmoreland. A member of the Soil Association, he is therefore an ardent advocate of compost. His new approach is the suggestion that weeds are not competitive but co-operative in a sort of symbiotic relationship with the crop; and, moreover, when composted supply humus that is useful not only quantitatively but qualitatively. Mr. King uses enough words, but not with sufficient precision to make clear whether his view is that weeds are to be desired or, except in otherwise bare ground, merely tolerated; and if tolerated, then for how long. A clue may perhaps be got at p. 135: "By all means let a policy of restraint be formulated where weeds are concerned, but not of total destruction whenever a weed is

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 25, 1952.