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BOOKS

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL

GEORGE HOGBEN: A BIOGRAPHY. by Herbert Roth: N.Z. Council for Educational Research. 18 6.

(Reviewed by L.J.W.)

As a young pupil-teacher in Invercargill I was once directed to attend an address to teachers by the Inspector-General on what was said to be his hobby—Mathematical Geography. I was not impressed, though I may have been if I had known that the little man with whiskers who bored without fixing me with his glittering eye had once played football for a Cambridge college.

A book about Hogben the man, distinct as far as may be from Hogben the Inspector-General, is to be desired, and the volume under review is intended to supply the need. Those who are not already familiar with the changes in our education system effected during the Hogben regime will find in this book a well-documented account; but those who have read A. G. Butcher's *Education in New Zealand* (1929) or A. E. Campbell's *Educating New Zealand* (1941) will be encouraged by the title to look for something more. Certainly they will find much to interest them, not only in the account of Hogben's forbears and of his pre-New Zealand days, but in his term at Christchurch Boys' High School and in the fuller story of his headmastership at Timaru. But what was there in this clever ambitious young man that won him, at 33, election as President of the New Zealand Education Institute and also of the Canterbury Philosophical Institute, and commended him while still under 36 to Archdeacon Harper and the Timaru Board?

He had rowed and played cricket and "football" for his college at Cambridge and "soccer" for the University, and had had several athletic successes; he was "popular with the boys," a "vigorous teacher," and a knowledgeable officer of the cadet corps in Christchurch. In this book we see him as a schoolmaster with radical plans for vitalising teaching; as a lecturer on Shakespeare, and on science and religion, and an active church worker; as an authority on the teaching of Buddha (and of Carlyle), founder of a Home-Reading Union and a pioneer seismologist. Later when he becomes Inspector-General we are shown a man of feverish activity who never finds time to enjoy life, and who uses a postcard to convey congratulations to a son living under the same roof.

Yet, in spite of all this information, no clear-cut portrait of the man emerges. How did Hogben get the appointment as Inspector-General within a month after the death of Habens? That "remains a mystery." There was no P.S.C. to delay or restrain Seddon, whose decision may have been a stroke of genius. But if Hall-Jones, the member for Timaru, had anything to do with it, was his motive the country's or Timaru's good? Hogben seems to have lost the confidence of his Board, though that fact need not have discredited him among discerning people. And was Hogben Seddon's instrument for democratising education, or vice versa? More anecdotes of the sort attributed to Hunter might help in general illumination, but where are they to be

gathered? There are none in *Fifty Years of National Education*, published in 1928 when there must have been many of Hogben's contemporaries capable of supplying them, thus helping to make more solid a somewhat unsubstantial picture. We can, however, be grateful for this volume produced with the care that marks the Council's publications.

THE AMATEUR THEATRE

PLAY PRODUCTION FOR AMATEURS. by Eric Bradwell: Allen and Unwin. English price, 10 6.

THE female spider is said to devour its mate; in amateur theatrical circles the devouring is performed by either sex and indiscriminately; in no associated



ERIC BRADWELL

arts, crafts or trades is mutual destructive criticism so prevalent. It is greatly to be hoped that Mr. Bradwell's modest but comprehensive volume will not suffer total critical destruction, particularly as he is a prophet in his own country.

He states that his work is not intended for the experienced amateur producer, but there is plenty that even the most talented New Zealander can learn and recall from this book, even if only by being provoked into disagreement. The chapter on business management is not very inspired and could have been omitted; this would have allowed for more on lighting—not technically, which he wisely avoids, but from the producer's point of view. All that he says is sound, even to his too tentative claim for the cheap, efficient old water dimmers that still can give a slower and softer fade of light than many modern contrivances. But there was room for more. Incidentally, cellophane is not easily inflammable; it retains its colour sufficiently for any amateur "run of the play," and being delicate in shade does not reduce power as much as gelatine. Likewise it is easy to deny the validity of several of his claims, and there are a few technical errors for the critical to relish.

It is well and simply written, though I could wish he did not so often use "commence" instead of "begin;" the illustrations are to the point and sufficient, and he covers the ground very fully with no serious omissions. There is little that is new or revolutionary, but this volume should be owned by every amateur group in New Zealand, and

they should not allow any producer to do a play who has not read it. Now it's over to the spiders!

—John V. Trevor

HIS OWN APOLOGIST

MEMOIRS, by Franz von Papen: Andre Deutsch. English price, 25-.

AFTER giving the assurance in the very first paragraph of his memoirs that he does "not wish to be ranged with those who have sought only to defend their mistakes and failures," von Papen proceeds to devote nearly 600 pages to defending his own mistakes and failures.

Professing the strictest loyalty to President von Hindenburg, he became German Chancellor at the end of May, 1932, and at once lifted the ban that had previously been imposed on Hitler's Brownshirts. Six months later, still making the same professions, he made way for General Schleicher, and after Schleicher's short-lived government fell he accepted the post of deputy-Chancellor in Hitler's first Cabinet. On the "night of the long knives," June 30, 1934, two of his officials were murdered and he himself was treated with the greatest ignominy, but this did not prevent him from continuing to serve the Nazis as German Minister in Vienna until Hitler marched into Austria in 1938. That event, of course, rendered his post superfluous, but even though another of his colleagues had meanwhile been murdered by the Gestapo he continued to serve Hitler as Ambassador at Ankara until shortly before the end of the war. After being tried and acquitted at Nuremberg he was re-arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment by a German court.

Von Papen certainly has an interesting story to tell, though he is obviously less concerned with entertaining the reader than with proving his own good intentions. In my opinion he achieves the former object more successfully than the latter. Amidst all his protestations of how he merely accepted office after office in order either to save his friends or serve his country one cannot help recalling a legendary figure, famed in song, who must surely be regarded as his prototype. I refer to the Vicar of Bray.

—R. M. Burdon

A MEDITATION

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY, by Louis Bouyer, translated by Sister Mary Benoit: Allen and Unwin. English price, 18-.

IT is difficult, perhaps even presumptuous, for a reader without theological training, who is not a professing Roman Catholic, to attempt an evaluation of this work by Father Bouyer, which is a meditation on the last three days of Holy Week. One can record, however, a personal impression. Father Bouyer's work has seemed to one reader neither an addition to pietistic and sentimental works of devotion, nor a formal analysis of liturgy. The restatement of Catholic truth in contemporary terms, without distortion, is part of a necessary exercise of Christian freedom. But some such statements seem likely to increase the real and lamentable fragmentation of Christendom; while others, however indirectly, may assist toward an inward unity of believers, in Christ. Father Bouyer's view of heresy must of necessity be offensive to many believing Protestants. But his meditation upon the mystery of the Redemption as shadowed forth in Roman Catholic liturgy can only command our respect and veneration. In particular, his consideration of death, of Divine love and judgment, and

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 27, 1953.