

Clearly, like so many militant crusaders, Labouchere was fascinated by the very kind of behaviour which he was so ready vehemently to condemn. He talked the language of morality in attacking imperialism, but there was a moral emptiness, an all-pervasive corruption, in all his attitudes and activities. We can see this, for instance, in connection with one of his favourite arguments, that the time and money devoted to the Empire ought instead to be concentrated on urgently needed domestic reforms, improving the condition of the people, and so forth. But the question which Dr Hind never gets around to answering is whether Labouchere really was at all concerned for social reform at home. In fact, the evidence is that he was not and that this criticism of imperialism was also entirely negative and a moral void. In this respect, Dr Hind's decision to focus on the artificial subject of 'Labouchere and the Empire' and not construct a picture of the wholeness of Labouchere as a Radical politician becomes even more unfortunate. It hinders our understanding even of his position on imperial matters.

Labouchere represented a debased version of the great nineteenth-century Radical-individualist tradition. He took little part or interest in organizations of any kind and relied instead for his political influence on what he could achieve as an individual, raising issues in the Press or in Parliament or offering his services as a go-between. He became a rootless factor in the political scheme of things, used to carry messages and do the intriguing and ferreting for more 'respectable' politicians. People were constantly telling him 'secrets' in the confident expectation that he would then put these into circulation. He coveted this kind of political role, but it was not one in which there was much dignity. The cynicism with which he invested the motives of the 'imperialists' was returned upon himself with interest, and he became an irritant, a gadfly, and a sometimes useful go-between, but never a man whom anyone trusted.

D. A. HAMER

Victoria University of Wellington

A Great View of Things: Edward Gibbon Wakefield. By June Philipp. Nelson, Melbourne, 1971. 113 pp. Australian price: \$1.95.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield in New Zealand: His Political Career 1853-1854. By Peter Stuart. Price Milburn, Wellington, 1971. 195 pp. N.Z. price: \$2.50.

THE BASIC objectives of Dr Philipp's short study of Edward Gibbon Wakefield are twofold: a clear statement of Wakefield's ideas about empire and colonization together with an assessment of their originality; and an analysis of the extent to which these notions penetrated imperial thinking and policy making, especially during the years 1830-32.

The book begins with a brief character sketch portraying a talented, energetic, unstable and unscrupulous individual, a doubtful ally who could become a vindictive opponent. Then follows an outline of the traditional

ways in which the problems of imperial control had been viewed by London officials, constitutional, legal and political solutions being the norm, programmes for economic and social development receiving virtually no attention at all. The context set, Dr Philipp proceeds to explain Wakefield's 'great view of things'. She emphasizes the need to distinguish between his theory of empire and his concept of systematic colonization, and evaluates the charge of inconsistency which both contemporaries and more recent commentators have levelled against the theorist. In defence of Wakefield, Dr Philipp stresses that his ideas on systematic colonization were not put forward initially as a scientific system, but as vague and flexible suggestions, subject to expedient modification.

Turning to the debate over the formulation of imperial land policy, to the Ripon regulations in particular, Dr Philipp re-examines two explanations of this legislation. Both are deemed inadequate: neither domestic conditions nor experience gained in colonies during the 1820s tell us why the Ripon land laws took their peculiar form. Dr Philipp instead argues persuasively for a third solution. Given the predominant role of Viscount Howick in matters concerning the Australian colonies, there is considerable evidence that he was strongly influenced by the ideas of a man for whom he had scant personal regard. The Ripon regulations in fact reflect Howick's endeavour to give effect to Wakefield's theory of empire and systematic colonization. The argument is clear and provocative. Teachers and students alike will find this a useful book, though its appeal and value might well have been enhanced by the inclusion of more contemporary documents in appendix form and correspondingly less quotation in the text.

Peter Stuart's penetrating analysis of Edward Gibbon Wakefield in New Zealand is a fascinating study and an important one. Not only does he uncover a hitherto neglected period of Wakefield's life and expose it as perhaps the most extraordinary phase of a very varied career; he also demonstrates that an understanding of Wakefield's activities in this period, 1853-54, is necessary to explain why the first sessions of the General Assembly were such a fiasco.

Following a serious illness which might well have impaired his judgement, Wakefield 'retired' to New Zealand, arriving in Canterbury early in February 1853. If he had expected an enthusiastic reception, he was doomed to disappointment. Such was the hostility and suspicion which his reputation engendered that neither in Christchurch nor in Wellington, to which he moved in March, did Wakefield find a community suitably deferential to his august presence. Yet the very last thing which he had anticipated in coming to 'his' colony was a lack of political influence. If the role of elder statesman was not automatically to be his, he would soon acquire it. For the next eighteen months, Wakefield's ambitions were to disturb, direct and dominate the course of colonial politics, and few politicians were unaffected in some measure by his machinations.

Stuart traces Wakefield's manoeuvres with precision and skill, at the same time sustaining the lively narrative which makes this book such a pleasure to read. Firstly there is the Hutt campaign where Wakefield, with astonishing speed — and considerable sophistry — secured his political footing in Grey's former stronghold, the small farmer community of the Hutt Valley.

The erstwhile exponent of the sufficient price now posed as the advocate of cheap land for the working settler. Elected by his Hutt supporters to both the provincial council and the General Assembly, Wakefield was soon disconcerting Superintendent Featherston and his cohorts by constant demonstrations of superior political ability. As Stuart notes, Wakefield's experienced, systematic and procedure-conscious mind gave him an immeasurable advantage over the tyros who faced him across the chamber (p. 90). Yet the inauguration of responsible government within the Wellington provincial legislature, primarily Wakefield's achievement, was simply a prelude to much greater things. The 'Old Giant Spider', as FitzGerald labelled him, was weaving his spells with a larger purpose in mind: to supervise the introduction of responsible government in New Zealand.

Wakefield thus began working assiduously to secure a provincial protest against Grey's interim financial arrangements; a provincial demand for a meeting of the Assembly; and a demand for responsible government in the central administration (p. 102). Yet in successfully directing the forces of colonial discontent against Grey, Wakefield was unable to diminish the suspicion with which he himself was regarded. Any co-operation between Wakefield and leading southern settlers was at best uneasy. Events in Auckland, May-September 1854, were to prove that distrust justified. The confused debate over responsible government; Acting-Governor Robert Wynyard's implementation of the Wakefieldian compromise; and Wakefield's chagrin at being excluded from the discussions preceding the formation of the mixed ministry: Stuart handles these issues with adroitness. He shows how Wakefield, increasingly alienated from FitzGerald, Sewell and Weld, moved from the position of advocate to that of opponent, failing to realize that the backstairs influence which he still sought to wield was incompatible with the very system of responsible government which he had helped inaugurate. And though the mixed ministry eventually resigned, Wakefield still did not attain the dominance he desired. In Attorney-General William Swainson, Gibbon Wakefield had met his match.

In many ways it is tempting to view the first sessions of New Zealand's parliament in terms of a magnificent farce. Its history certainly has dramatic potential — plots and counter-plots, battles and intrigue, villains and heroes, dénouement and débâcle. But, as Stuart reveals, to the players the drama was a serious affair and the impact of their participation would be lasting, both on themselves and on the political development of the colony at large. More than one southern politician breathed a heartfelt sigh of relief when Wakefield was 'removed from colonial politics as suddenly as he had burst into them', when his political career in New Zealand closed 'with all the unsatisfactory abruptness of an unfinished chapter', for these years had seen the instability and unscrupulousness for which Wakefield was noted in the 1820s exposed with 'unpleasant clarity'. In New Zealand Wakefield abandoned the very principles of systematic colonization for which he had become famous. Instead there appeared a frontier politician, professing democratic sentiments and expounding opinions totally at variance with his former doctrines. The theorist had been transformed into a dangerous radical politician, unable to be trusted by the very élite which the Wakefield system had been designed to create.

JEANINE WILLIAMS

University of Auckland