always in ways approved by his biographer. Murdoch went overboard for social credit in the 1930s, an episode which did not reflect well on his grasp of economics. However, Murdoch was a better informed and more effective critic of Australia's heavy-handed censorship in the 1930s. Twenty years later he emerged as a major critic of Menzies' efforts to ban the Communist Party. Indeed, La Nauze maintains that Murdoch can take some of the credit for the narrow defeat of the 1951 referendum in which the government sought approval to ban the Communist Party.

While Murdoch's vitality is impressive, particularly the consistent productivity well into his nineties, he emerges as a man who peaked early, but who failed to develop. He was something of an intellectual bonsai; alive, graceful and often effective but not fully grown. While the validity of this type of comment lies outside the sphere of La Nauze's concern in this personal memoir, his crisp summation of Murdoch's career will nevertheless prove indispensable to a later generation of historians.

D.R. WALKER

University of New South Wales

Muslims and Mongols. Essays on Medieval Asia. By J.J. Saunders. Edited by G.W. Rice. Whitcoulls, for the University of Canterbury, 1977. 143 pp. N.Z. price: $7.95.

THERE are very few historians in the world who know much about Asia in the Middle Ages and who can write with the urbane and elegant thoughtfulness of J.J. Saunders. New Zealand was very fortunate in having Saunders and very unfortunate in losing him through his untimely death in 1972. I had always hoped that he could eventually produce a large book of synthesis about the interaction of Asia and Europe during the Middle Ages but since this was not to be, we must welcome the care and wisdom with which Rice and the University of Canterbury have put this volume of fine essays together – a modest monument to a good scholar and much more modest than he deserved. The four essays cover the problems of Nomads as empire-builders, the defeat of the Mongols at the hand of the Egyptian Mamluks, the disappearance of Christianity from medieval Asia and the problem of Islamic decadence. Though fragments, they allow us a glimpse of the breadth and scope which Saunders could have achieved had he lived. European and American historians, especially that younger generation who imagine that cliometrics, the new urban history or the history of child-rearing habits in seventeenth-century France and similarly fascinating topics hold the clue to man's history, are blissfully unaware that the real antidote to Eurocentricity is a knowledge of Asia in general and of the spread and power of Islam in particular. With the exception of Runciman, Toynbee and Pirenne, and such specialists as Rodinson and Montgomery Watt, most of them have only been aroused by the modern oil crisis to realize that the clue to European history lies more deeply than is comfortable in the history of Asia. J.J. Saunders belonged to these exceptions and one can only hope that these very readable

fragments here collected in a slim volume will find a wide reading public. He wrote with such skill that even these four fragments will convey to the discerning reader the fact that the movements of peoples, religions and empires in Asia have exercised a determining influence on European history.

PETER MUNZ

Victoria University of Wellington

The Government of India and Reform Policies towards Politics and the Constitution 1916-1921. By P.G. Robb. Oxford University Press (London Oriental series: Volume 32), Oxford, 1976. 379 pp. U.K. price: £10.50.

IN the history of Modern India, 1917-1919 has long been recognized as a watershed. The Montagu Declaration, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the 1919 Government of India Act marked the profound reappraisal of British policy whereby a goal – 'the progressive realization of responsible government' – was accepted, and from that time on what was at issue, in essence, was the timing of constitutional advance rather than the ultimate objective. What had not been clear, until we had Dr Robb's book, was the exact nature of this change of policy and the way in which it was brought about. Partly this stemmed from the contrasting characters of the two leading actors involved: Montagu, the brilliant and articulate Jewish Secretary of State for India, 'unreliable' in conservative eyes, whose *Indian Diary* published by his widow after his death, seemed to confirm his leading role in pushing through the reforms; and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, safe, methodical, averse to the histrionic gesture, too easily typed at the time and by historians as the conservative foil in an improbable partnership. 'Montagu-Chelmsford' – the very order of the names has always suggested a relative importance of roles.

This will no longer do. Not only does Dr Robb remind us that many of the changes introduced were under consideration before Montagu took office and show the extent to which they stemmed from thinking within the Government of India rather than in the home government, but he also gives a new and thoroughly persuasive picture of Chelmsford. He was cautious certainly, but not conservative. Moved, as Dr Robb points out 'by the force of events, and logic of changing situations, increasing needs, burgeoning demands. . .his was the liberalism of the pragmatist not the doctrinaire'. With this went an insistence upon consultation, particularly with his Executive Council, as a means of decision making. The contrast with his predecessors was striking. Thoroughly effective in the committee room, there was something in his personality or temperament that made him much less successful at a distance. There is a certain paradox in that while he helped transform India into a 'political' society Chelmsford singularly lacked the public skills of a politician himself. While he recognized that there must be a fundamental change in British government in India he has been remembered not for this but for Dyer's shooting of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators in