The Commonwealth of Nations. Origins and Impact, 1869-1971. By W. David McIntyre. University of Minnesota Press, 1977. xvii, 596pp. N.Z. price: $42.20.

IN ITS SCOPE of subject matter this book is probably the most ambitious undertaken by any New Zealand professor of history. Professor McIntyre may have used fewer words than John Beaglehole in his work on James Cook and he may have covered a shorter period than some New Zealand historians have covered in their historical surveys. But he has touched on the histories of the thirty and more members of the Commonwealth as well as developing his main theme, the transformation of the Empire of dependent colonies into a Commonwealth of independent states, a Commonwealth which has itself altered its intrinsic characteristics very considerably in the last two decades of the hundred years covered in this grand survey.

The author has described his plan of attack or scheme of work in the opening paragraph of his Preface, written presumably after he had completed his formidable task. As the scope and form of the book may be best described in the words of this 'plan', it is worth setting down as given: 'The subject is divided into three periods: 1869-1917, 1918-1941, and 1942-1971. . . . Within each of the three periods I have organized the discussion into four subdivisions dealing respectively with the Dominions, the Indian Empire, the crown colonies and protectorates, and the "keynote" of the era.'

To carry through any one of the 'four subdivisions' to a successful conclusion would be a very considerable undertaking, but David McIntyre has most competently dealt with all four, thus completing a Herculean undertaking. While he acknowledges his indebtedness to eight other historians who read and criticized the first draft of the book, it is perfectly evident, both from the scholarly documentation and the style of writing, that this book is very much the product of Professor McIntyre's own researches and his tremendously wide reading in the literature of British imperialism, the histories of the separate colonies and countries of the British Empire and the Commonwealth, and the monographs on British policies in a variety of fields. Despite the complexity of the subject and the diversity of areas involved, he has given his survey a unity which makes his book the outstanding work of its kind for the period under review. One cannot but admire his capacity to sum up the arguments of others and to select the most interesting and valuable quotations from their specialist writings.

While, as with McIntyre's earlier work *Colonies into Commonwealth,* his central theme has been the evolution of the Empire into a Commonwealth which is an extremely loosely associated group of independent nations, he has found it impossible to locate any definite organic unity even in the Empire at the height of its powers. He has therefore chosen to discuss such important themes as the network of communications, the institutional relationships and the constitutional growth both within the individual colonies and the Empire as a whole, as well as the economic and strategic ends sought by British and colonial or ex-colonial leaders. On the controversial question of the speed with which independence was granted to most of the newer members of the Commonwealth, he quotes Iain Macleod as saying that even before he had become Secretary of State, 'I had convinced myself that for all the manifest dangers of moving quickly in Africa, the dangers of being too slow were greater', but he goes on to mention that Macmillan, Macleod's and Britain's Prime Minister, admitted in his memoirs that most of the

new countries were unprepared for independence when in fact they secured it.

As with most surveys of both the length and breadth of this book, a reviewer could find any number of points to praise and others with which he might take issue. For example, while I hold that McIntyre has over-emphasized the importance of fear as *the* motivating factor in Imperialist expansion, I think he has made an excellent job of contrasting the views of Oliver and Fage, on the one hand, with those of Robinson and Gallagher, on the other, when discussing the partition of Africa. He might, too, have gone further with his explanation of the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961, especially in view of the degree to which attitudes to apartheid have continued to influence relations between various Commonwealth countries. But taken all in all, this is a first-class survey well worth reading and using as an introductory text. It is unfortunate that its price will place it beyond the reach of most undergraduates but perhaps a cheaper paperback edition will be forthcoming.

ANGUS ROSS

Dunedin

Maori Land Tenure: Studies of a Changing Institution. By I.H. Kawharu. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977. 363pp. N.Z. price: $36.20.

PROFESSOR KAWHARU'S *Maori Land Tenure* is a welcome contribution in a field of study that is riddled with complexities and problems. The intricacies of any one aspect of the topic might have proved sufficient for a major study in itself. Yet the author has successfully produced a most comprehensive record of the many tenurial peculiarities associated with Maori land from the pre-Waitangi period to the present day. The culmination of almost twenty years' work, the book is based on two Oxford theses and several other pieces of research. With such 'disparate origins' the text might easily have lacked cohesion. Kawharu, however, has drawn his material together skilfully by emphasizing the factors of change that have led to the present confusion of title and continuing loss of Maori land.

In a brief introductory chapter that outlines the history of relations between the government and the Maori people, Kawharu traces the several methods by which Europeans acquired Maori land: first through Crown purchase under the pre-emptive clause of the Treaty of Waitangi, then through the confiscations during the wars of the 1860s, and finally, through direct purchase under the Native Land Act 1865 and successive legislation. The effects of this legislation on nineteenth-century Maori society are clearly indicated in chapter two. Traditional Maori land tenure was largely communal in nature and based on rights of occupancy and use. This was drastically altered by the operations of the Maori Land Court that was set up under the 1865 Act. To specified members of a tribe or hapu, the Court granted an individual title which opened the way to the partition and alienation of vast areas of Maori land. Thus a minority within a tribe was given the power to determine the interests of the majority. The task of dealing with succession also fell on the Court which introduced a right of inheritance from both parents — an