### CANBERRA

(By Prot. W. K. Hancock) Since I have not yet made up my own mind about Canberra, I cannot hope to say, within the space of the few hundred words alloted to me, anything that my readers will find brilliant and convincing. Yet 1 feel that I should say something, for (anberra, if it leaves many Australians rather bored, is exciting much interest in the outside world.

During a brief visit to the Federal Territory I spent an arduous time examining the plan of the city, unravelling its administrative and architectural history (a horrid tangle), and conversing with Ministers, members of Parliament, civil servants, and shopkeepers-that is, with the whole popu-

Perhaps I can best begin by describing some of the impressions which first tantalised me and still persist in clinging. I remember an evening view of the city from a vantage point five miles away, a view winding down rippding grass slopes through amiable undulations to the lights already twinkling, and beyond them the rapid ridges and ravines running upward to the beautifully lifting scarp of the Monaro plateau. country!

#### Exploring the City

It is the country which I knew as a boy, the Australia for which I shall always feel nostalgia. But the lights of the city, amid such spacious loveliness, seemed a petty irrelevance. When I first saw these same lights from the steps of Parliament House, at the southern end of the city, they appeared confident and merry. I-was, impressed. But in the morning 1 felt that I had been cheated, for all that they had illumined were miles and miles of empty reads and a few suburban clusters.

I set out to explore the city in the day time (by motor car, for it would take days to walk through those endless streets). The impression left upon me was one of bewilderment, of Round and round I went until I had forfotten north and south and east and west, and the familiar landmarks kept appearing and disappearing in the oddest and most unexpected manner.

Moreover, the little suburban dwellings, many of which are pretty in a flimsy way, gave me an impression of anarchic individualism. But this impression, I felt, must be false. Canberra was a city which had not been permited to grow; it had been planned mapped, built to order. Should I not feel the harmony of a great design?

#### Impression of Order

When I began to study the plan of the city I certainly received an impression of order-indeed, that impression was at times overpowering. The buildings of the future university, for example, are grouped with the analytical exactitude of an American sociological textbook. A series of concentric circles arranges in their proper order the fundamental sciences, the theoretical sciences, and the applied sciences, beyond which are "those spheres where the sciences will be utilised in real life."

Thus biology leads out gradually to medicine and athletics, and astronomy points to the plastic, graphic, and mustcal arts. This, possibly, is very profound; but I do not in the least understand it.

The general plan of the city is exceedingly geometrical. But amid the intricate incoherency of sweeping curves there is the simplifying relief of the three "axes." upon which the balance of the design rests. Upon the treatment of these axes the future character of Canberra depends. I realise that the apparent formlessness of the existing city is due largely to the fact that its most essential features are as yet not even sketched.

It is only fair to exercise a little patience in criticising Canberra, for the task of translating the paper plan into three-dimensional form will hardly have begun until the great series of water basins which bisects the town shall have taken form, and the main lines of the axes shall have been

#### emphasised by monumental edifices. Australian Architecture

The future of Canberra, then, will depend upon our architects. And here I must confess to a double misgiving. In the first place, Australian architecture today is a vast and bideous desert, with only a few refreshing onses here and there. Have we the men large enough for this task, and if we have them, are we likely to employ

them? In the second place, I am doubtful whether the plan itself, although it gives promise-on paper-of a formal symmetry which is almost excessive. will be easily translated into brick and Stone.

Yet that, after all, is its reason for existence. It is futile to trace pretty lines on a map unless those pretty lines are one day to reappear in streets and squares and parks and buildings, thronged by a delighted people.

#### Misgivings and Warnings

I have reached a point where the argument, if it were to be useful, should become a little technical. But I have also come almost to the end of the space allotted to me. The final judgment upon Canberra will be made far in the future, and it will be a judgment upon the quality of the Australian people. For every nation gets the cities which it deserves.

It is too early to condemn Canberra; but it is not too early to voice misgivings and warnings. The short history of the national capital is an uninspiring one, a history of petty jealousies and quarrels, of small men in charge of a large undertaking.

At present the most characteristic thing about Canberra is its suburbs, which accurately express what seems to be the national ideal-middle class comfort. The most hopeful thing about Canberra today is its emptiness. There is room there for harmony and dignity; and these will come if ever Australia becomes an harmonious and a dignified nation.

# THE LEWS THE WS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1928

**AMERICA** 

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

Historians must appear to their acquaintances to be the most ignorant of men. Almost everyday some hopeful engulrer will ask the historian for an off-hand opinion on Maya civilisation or the love affairs of Mary Queen of Scots, or the foundation of the Straits

Settlements, or what men had for

breakfast in the eleventh century. There are prodigies like Sir Charles Oman or the late Lord Acton who would immediately give an exact answer to any of these questions. But the ordinary historian does not feel able to reply to more than one or two out of four. Man's life is short, but the life of mankind is long and crowded. Even learned men cannot know many things intimately.

The other day somebody asked me searching questions about the history of America. Of this history I am pro foundly ignorant. I have not even "examined" on it.

Nevertheless, I am arrogant enough. when the conversation turns upon American affairs, to advance very definite opinions about the past and the future of that country, and so far the help which I have got from three whether there is anybody in Adelaide any rate, given me an introduction to the Chinese and Japanese languages American civilisation, and I recom- and of the history of China and Japan ; mend them to anyone who wishes to and there are few people in South Auslay a foundation for his studies of the tralia who have an intimate knowledge United States.

#### "Democracy in America"

The first book is De Tocqueville "Democracy in America." It consists of four volumes, and that in itself should be a recommendation. In our time the fashion is all for short books, biographies of not more than 300 pages. novels that the reader can rush through in a day, histories that are packed and pressed into their covers like bully-beef into a tin. I admit that this fashion has developed in many writers a gift of epigram, suggestiveness, and condensed brilliance

Nowaday we are all bewitched by speed; we like to snatch our pleasures even in reading. The modern age does not love rest, and modern writers seem frightened of boring us, even for a page. The old novelists and biographers and historians were content to take their own time. They wrote at leisure for that "gentle reader" who now survives only in hidden nooks and crannies.

And, on the whole, I am inclined to think that they wrote better than we do. If their books had less excitement they had more wisdom. In reading history it is a sound rule to start with the old books, the long books, the five-volume books. If this were, indeed, the best of all possible worlds every lover of historic studies would begin by working his leisurely way through Hume and Gibbon, Grote, Froude, and Macaulay, and by despising the monographs.

#### Ill-instructed Ideas

De Tocqueville wrote his four volumes nearly a hundred years ago, when Europe was fearfully observing the collapse of the old aristocratic society and awaiting the perils of democracy. What De Tocqueville saw in America convinced him that the ideas entertained of democracy were on the whole ill-instructed. He believed that the great danger would be not anarchic innovation, but materialistic conservatism; not a violent pulling-

down, but a slow levelling-down. He saw that democracy was inevitable, and believed that it should be welcomed. But while he foresaw that it would equalise the conditions of men and increase the sum of human comfort, he believed that it would be unfriendly to heroic achievement.

Thus he posed the fundamental problem of democracy-Is comfort for all compatible with quality for the whole? How shall democracy reconcile the pursuit of individual wellbeing with the pursuit of that spiritual creativeness which is due from every people?

While he saw in America an illustration of the tendencies which were working more slowly and obscurely in Europe, De Tocqueville was also content to observe American society for its own sake. If we compare his observations with those set down by Bryce in "The American Commonwealth" or by Siegfried in "America Comes of Age" we are surprised at the small extent of the changes which have occurred in the United States in the last hundred years.

American Civilisation Of course, the growth of population and of the machinery of life has been prodigious. America has waxed in wealth and power. But the characteristics which Bryce and Siegfried see are those which De Tocqueville saw a hundred years ago. There has been no change in the quality of American civilisation. This statement may seem almost incredible. Yet I believe that anyone who reads De Tocqueville will find himself saying, chapter after chapter :- "But this is just how things are today. Surely this is a modern

book." I have not sufficient space to attempt any summary of the main conclusions of De Tocqueville which agree so strikingly with those of Bryce and Siegfried. On the whole, it would be a pity if I did so, for this article is written to give some hints to those who would like to begin reading about America; and half the fun of reading a book is lost if you know beforehand too exactly what you may expect. think it would be best to begin a hundred years back with De Tocqueville or at the present day with Siegfried. Whichever is taken first, Bryce finds

When he has read these three books the enquirer will feel the need of some connecting link of history. The best suggestion I can make is that he should get hold of "The Rise of American Civilisation," by Charles and Mary Beard.

his place between the two.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1929

### PEOPLING AUSTRALIA

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

It is a pleasure and a duty for any Australian who reads a good book about his country to bring it before the notice of his fellow-men. Unfortunately, there are few good books about Australia, and there are few Australians who write them.

The book with which I am now concerned is good in parts and bad in others. But the noteworthy thing about it is not what it has achieved. but what it promises. It is a sign that Australians once again feel the need of thinking, as they felt it toward the close of last century. And if we form the habit of thinking who knows what we may not achieve?

The book is called "The Peopling of Australia," and it is published by the Melbourne University Press for the Institute of Pacific Relations. Something should be said about this Institute. It is definitely a non-party body. with its headquarters in Honolulu and branches in all countries bordering the Pacific.

Although we in Australia are inclined to announce that the Pacific is becoming the world centre, that our future will be decided in the Pacific that the Pacific means this and that to nobody has called my bluff. I attri- us and to the world, we nevertheless bute my good luck (how long it will know little of this great ocean and the continue I should not like to say) to peoples who live round it. I doubt or four books. These books have, at who has an exact knowledge of both of the South American republics.

> Even in Melbourne and Sydney it is difficult to find people with this knowledge. But if the Pacific is becoming the new world centre and our destiny is in the Pacific, surely this knowledge is necessary.

#### Institute of Pacific Relations

It is this idea, occurring simultaneously to different people in countries washed by the Pacific, which accounts for the establishment of the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Japanese, of course, know much more about us than we know about them. But even the Japanese have much to learn about Australia. We ourselves have much to learn about Australia.

Consider, for example, this question of population. How many people will Australia hold when it is as densely populated according to its resources as is the United States or Europe? In what parts of Australia will that population be distributed? What size of population is likely to bring the greatest degree of wellbeing to Australians? Is the wellbeing of Australians the only consideration?

Is there not, as an illustration, something which we may call "the legitimate needs of Europe"? Or, to turn to questions of present and past fact, what is the racial composition of Australian people? What is its rate of increase? Is that rate of increase a reasonable one, or is it desirable to increase or diminish it? To what extent is the increase due to an excess of births over deaths? To what extent is it due to immigration? What effect does immigration have on our economic system, and what effect does our economic system have on immigration?

#### Fuller Information Needed

These are but some of the questions on which we need fuller information. I do not suggest for a moment that the most rigid scientific enquiry will solve hese problems.

Population is like water: it tends to find its own level, and sometimes it breaks the barriers which hold it back, and its inrush spreads devastation far and wide. The most exact meteorological knowledge in the world will not prevent a cloud from bursting. But it may help us to be prepared for the cloudburst, and sometimes forewarned

s forearmed. Similarly, if we can attain to a closer knowledge of population tendencies we shall be the better prepared to escape the worst consequences of unpleasant situations and make the best of pleasant ones.

#### Important Issues

"The Peopling of Australia" suggests answers to many of the questions which I have mentioned. The answers are far from being final and definite. Indeed, most of them raise further questions which will have to be met In their turn. But it is gratifying that a beginning has been made. A group of men met in Melbourne, invited discussions on important issues from those most qualified to deal with them, and then probed and criticised and debated the contributions which were received. Out of all this mental activity came the essays in this book.

Simultaneously, men in America. China, and the Argentine have been engaged in the same sort of thing. Next year delegates from the various countries will meet at their own expense somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. and will consider the work of the various national branches of the Insti-

It is difficult to imagine a more satisfactory way of developing intellectual co-operation and mutual understanding among the various peoples. I do not doubt that the general conference of the Institute will find "The Peopling of Australia" interesting reading. But the point which I now wish to make is that it is interesting reading for Australians,

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 1929

### AUSTRALIA

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

I remember having heard an English visitor to the Commonwealth ask number of Australians what books he ought to read about their country. "Adam Lindsay Gordon," said one. "For the Term of his Natural Life," remarked another, "Rusden's History of Australia," replied a third. I could not help thinking that the answers were rather out of date. These Aus tralians were like blind men leading the blind. They did not know much about their own country.

Within the past few years several useful books have been written about Australia, and an intelligent traveller may easily prepare himself to understand this country before he leaves his own shores.

In particular, there is no need for anyone to have foggy ideas about the economic situation. Since Mr. J. Sutcliffe published his study of "The National Dividend' eight years ago many competent investigators have analysed Australia's prosperity. The latest of them is Dr. F. Benham, who last year produced a brilliant little book on "The Prosperity of Australia. In this book Dr. Benham passed under brief review the whole economic system of the country, and unticipated most of the judgments of the British Economic Mission which visited Australia last year. The report of that mission is short and pleasantly written. It can be bought for threepence, and deserves to be widely read.

#### Complicated Questions

Of course, in such a summary piece of work there are certain to be gaps and even mistakes. Some of these gups are filled in by two collections of studies recently published by the Institute of Pacific Relations. One of these is called "The Peopling of Australia." It deals particularly, although un evenly, with immigration and allied problems. The other, which is called "Studies in Australian Affairs," contains excellent essays on the Australian standard of living, financial policy, natural resources, the New Guinea mandate (to which the Melbourne branch of the institute has also deveted a special volume), Australian treaty obligations, and other important questions.

Naturally in such a dragnet volume the quality of work is uneven. Many of the questions raised are too complicated to be solved in a few pages. But Australia will soon be reading some of the books it needs.

Consider the most conspicuous gaps in our economic literature. We have never had a readable and learned economic history of Australia within reasonable length. (No one can carry in his luggage four heavy volumes of Coghlan.) We have never had a full and severe examination of the Australian tariff. We have never had a detailed enquiry into the financial and administrative structure of the multitudinous economic activities of any of our Governments.

Books on all these subjects are now in course of preparation, and although I cannot give away the secret of their authors' names. I can say that I have read these books in draft and that each is good.

### Economic Stocktaking

Forty years ago the Australian people were thinking hard. Then they achieved Federation and settled down to enjoy life. Now they are beginning to think again. I am certain that a visitor to our country could not remain in it a week without realising that Australians are busily engaged in an economic stocktaking.

Two other books, dealing with subjects half within the sphere of economics and half outside it, deserve to be mentioned. The first is the massive volume of Mr. G. Anderson on the practice of Industrial Arbitration in Aus-

tralia Mr. Anderson is a graduate of Melbourne University in Philosophy, Economics, and Law. He is also a practising barrister before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and is president of the Master Printers' Association. He is therefore competent to explain his subject (which I confess is not to me a very interesting one) from the points of view of practice and theory.

Far more attractive to the ordinary Australian is a small volume by Prof. H. S. Stapledon entfilled, "A Tour Through Australia and New Zealand." Prof. Stapledon is learned on the subject of grass, and his book describes the making of our pastures and fields by man and beast. It is delightfully written, and is full of information which even the city-bred Australian will find fascinating. I should imagine that to the farmer and pastoralist It is indispensable.

I had almost forgotten the most comprehensive of all books which bave been published about Australia-the "Australian Encyclopedia," which is a bulky two-volume testimony to the public spirit of Angus & Robertson. Sydney.

#### Mine of Information

Six months ago I advised a friend of mine not to buy this book, "Surely It is the sort of thing." I said, "that one refers to in a library." Since then I have bought it myself. It is absolutely an indispensable book. It is a mine of information on everything that has any importance in Australia, and the general level of its quality has seldom, I think, been passed in a work of this kind in any other country.

Australians at present seem concerned chiefly about their bread and butter. Nobody is writing good poetry, and the general level of literature here compared with that of other countries is low.

However, Henry Handell Richardson has completed her trilogy of "The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney," and her last volume, "Ultima Thule," achieved immediate recognition in England as a good novel. I should like to warn intending renders of this book that it should be read, if possible, in the mornings. It is certainly not a book to read in bed before turning out the light.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1929

## NATION BUILDERS

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

"Bullders and Pioneers of Aus-

tralia" is the title of a recent book

by Mr. Arthur Jose, who is well known

as a writer of Austrolian history and

as one of the editors of the excellent

Australian Encyclopaedia. The title is

a curious one, for it might have been

imagined that the pioneers were the

builders of Australia. Mr. Jose, con-

vinced that man is a political animal,

seems to assume that the building which

is most worth while is done in poll-

tics. His pioneers-men like the Blax-

lands and Simeon Lord-may have dis-

covered new pastures or opened up

avenues of trade; but he does not con-

sider them to have been architects of

a free and independent Australia. His

four master-builders are Macquarie.

will find this book well worth reading.

By means of his four short biographies

Mr. Jose traverses the most important

stages in the political evolution of the

Australian people. The sketch of

Macquarle introduces us to the

struggle which transformed a colony

of convicts and gaolers into a colony

of free men. The story of Wentworth

("always a Whig, never a Radical"

epitomises the growth of Parliamen-

tory government in Australia. Parkes

stands for the advent of democracy

as we know it here; and Deakin made

articulate the Commonwealth for

which Parkes had struggled. Mr. Jose

links together the men and the move-

ments in a skilful and an entertain-

But is he correct in his choice of the

master builders? Were Wentworth and

Macquarie, for example, the two most

important men in the first 60 years of

Australia's short history? I should

have put Macarthur before either of

them. Consider the circumstances of

early New South Wales. The colony

was intended to be a penal settlement.

and the most which England hoped

from it was that it might, by peasant

agriculture, make itself self-supporting.

Macarthur conceived the idea that it

might achieve something more—that It

might play a useful part in the great

world of profit and exchange. England

at that time depended upon Spain for

her wool, but the Spanish growers were

ridden by tradition and routine. The

Germans began to beat them in fair

competition; but they had to contend

with the rigors of a severe winter cli-

mate. Why should not Australia enter

the struggle, prove that she was worth

something, and fight her way to sol-

Knowing people like Sir Joseph

Banks shook their heads over such

"theoretical speculations." The prac-

tical men in the colony were rude and

sceptical. But Macarthur achieved

his purpose, with the result that Eng-

lish capital and free English settlers

began to pour into Australia. After

this, self-government was bound to

come sooner or later, and it would

have come whether Wentworth had

lived or not. But, to this day, Aus-

tralia's economic and social system re-

poses upon the foundations laid by

Nearly a hundred years after

Macarthur had initiated his "mere

theoretical speculations," another ob-

stinate immigrant was causing the

wisest people to shake their heads over

his "abstruse experiments" in the

breeding of wheat. In little plots at

Cuppacumbalong, near Canberra,

Farrer was producing varieties of

wheat which would resist rust and

bunt, would stand up to wind, would

flourish in the hotter and moister

lands of the north, and in the drier

lands of the mallee or of Western Aus-

tralia would utilise every drop of

water falling upon them in the short

season of winter rain. The work of

Farrer, more than that of any other

man save Macarthur, has rectified the

economic frontiers of Australia.

among the builders of Australia.

Farrer, I think, should have a place

So another of Mr. Jose's four must

take a lower seat. It should not. I

think, be Deakin. Perhaps I am pre-

judiced in his favor because words are

my trade, and words do not count for

very much in Australia. I do not for

one moment accept the common opinion

that Deakin was merely a man of

words. Ability to speak the King's

English effectively and gracefully seems

to be regarded as an unfair advan-

tage which some politicians possess

over others; and because Deakin pos-

sessed this gift, it is often assumed

that he possessed no others. The very

reverse of this is true. Anyone who

troubles to read his speeches will soon

realise that he grasped facts as

readily as his ablest opponents and col-

leagues; and it is now very widely

known that he, alone of his contempo-

raries, understood the financial

realities of the Commonwealth Consti-

But I would claim a place for him

among the first four, for his words

alone. Many things had to be ex-

plained to Australia and to the world

in that first decade of the Common-

wealth, and they might so easily have

been explained in foolish and offensive

words. Deakin chose the right words.

It is due to him more than to any

other man that Australia, in those

critical years, even when she made

mistakes, never made herself ridi-

tution.

vency and self-respect?

John Macarthur.

Place For Farrer

ing fashion.

Vision of Macarthur

Let me say at once that Australians

Wentworth, Parkes, and Deakin.

# FRENCH REVOLUTION BOOKS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1929

THE BEWS

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock) There has been recently translated into English a book called - "The French Revolution," by M. Muthlez, It can be recommended as the best general explanation which has been produced in recent years of what the revolution meant to France and to the world. With this recommendation there should go a warning. The book is colored by marked democratic sympathies. But, then, nearly all bookscertainly nearly all books about the French Revenution-are colored by sympathies of some sort or another.

The French still take their Revolu tion very seriously. When they write about it they write as partisans. Con sider for a moment the rour most prominent men produced by the Revolution-Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre and Napoleon. Nearly every French writer will choose one of these men for his hero and denounce one or two of the others as villains or as muddlers who spoilt everything. Heroes and Villains

M. Aulard chooses Danton as his hero, and denounces Napoleon as the wrecker who destroyed everything for which the Revolution stood. M. Vandal, on the other band, hails the "Arrival of Bonaparte" (that is the title of his great book) as the realisation of the essential purpose of the Revolution. Mirabean and Napoleon-these were. according to Vanual, the only realistic statesmen of the Revolution. But M. Mathlez disapproves equally Mirabeau, Danton, and Napoleon. His man is Lobespierre.

The clue to this divergence of views is easily found. M. Vandal is a Conservative, M. Anlard a bourgeois Republican, and M. Mathlez is a Socialist. They write, more or less, as they vote. This makes them vastly cutertaining, but perhaps for the unguarded reader a little misleading And all three of them are concerned cheifly with domestic affairs.

Traps for the unwary occur just as frequently in the foreign history of the French Revolution. The most impressive study of the impact of the French Revolution upon Europeperhaps the most impressive work upon modern European history which has appeared within the last generationis Sorel's "L'Europe et la Revolution Francaise," printed in six volumes.

Small historians are like jackals: they feed on the lion's kill. A score of petty historians have attached themselves to Sorel. Yet all his magnificent labor is inspired and directed by one preconception, the same preconception which for years has determined the speeches of M. Poincare on foreign offairs.

#### Struggle for Szcurity

The whole foreign policy of the Revolution, from its earliest days to Waterloo, was, according to Sorel, a struggle for the Rhine frontier, for security. The audacity of this argument is staggering. Of course, it has not been unanswered. Just as the Ruhr policy of M. Poincare was met by the recon ciliation policy of M. Herriof, so the six volumes of M. Sorel, with their emphasis on French security, find a reply in the four volumes (far less impressive volumes) of M. Bourgeols, with their emphasis upon European col-

aboration. I should like to think that I do not often write such pedantic and professorial articles for evening papers. But so many people are ready to talk about the French Revolution that I am led to hope that a few may be ready to

read about it. To anyone desirous of gaining a fair grounding in the subject I should sugcest a course of steady reading in Taine, Aulard, Vandal, Mathiez, Sorel. and Bourgeois. In these days, however, few people have leisure for steady reading. Yet quite a fair number like to know how things have happened and how they are happening.

#### Short Cuts to History

Of course, there are in history, as in everything else, short cuts; and someimes the short cuts are worth taking if one has not the leisure to follow the longer road round. There is potted history just as there is potted meat; and there is no reason in either case why the mental or physical appetite should not taste and enjoy it.

Sometimes the potting is remarkably good. One tiny book on the French Revolution, written by De Tocqueville. has already survived the greater part of a century, and still remains, in my opinion, the most satisfying and competent work upon the subject. Its title is "The Old Regime." It is a work of genius, a necessary part of the rending of every educated person. whether or not he or she be an historical student.

After De Tocqueville comes Mr. Lowes Dickenson, who in "Revolution and Reaction in Modern France" has traced the rise and fall of the revolutionary movement from 1789 almost to the present day. This book has been recently reprinted.

The two books together hardly contain more than four or five hundred small pages, and will give certain satisfaction to that great majority of intelligent readers which is compelled to spend eight hours a day in earning a living.