

than usual, at least in general terms, of that Constitution which was the toast of their ancestors and which today has, it is claimed, at least stood the test of time. Fewer, perhaps, are aware that it has stood the test of time precisely because it has moved with the times, found new answers to old problems and adapted itself to new situations. It has come a long way since Dickey wrote; and there is every reason to think that it is now entering a period of comparatively rapid evolution.

And here, for the ordinary reader as opposed to the university student, lies the interest of Dr Marshall and Mr Moodie's book. One would like to think that it will be read by a large number of men and women who have no personal interest in passing examinations, and whose motive is that in-expert yet serious and sustained personal interest in the political institutions of their country which is the essential life-blood of parliamentary democracy as we have it today. To begin with, the book is of the right length, scope and arrangement for such a reader, and it provides him with a most useful list of reference books for further reading. The 'problems' with which it is concerned are precisely those of which he is aware but which he rarely sees clearly formulated. They almost invariably crop up whenever public affairs or political administration are alluded to, or are under discussion. As Sir Oliver Franks has said, "The amount of time that people are willing to waste in hearing each other talk is a very important constituent of our public life". Dr Marshall and Mr Moodie will do much to reduce the waste and increase the importance.

Mr Verney's book provides in a sense a companion volume; and again it is concerned with a number of problems of which many readers will be aware but of which far fewer will possess any very clear appreciation. For instance, we are constantly being told that what really matter in the business of politics are oligarchies, élites, 'establishments': and here is the best short, and yet comprehensive, discussion of the thesis which I have yet seen. Again, the age-old debate between the requirements of good government and the demand for popular participation has acquired a new urgency in a world in which many states had no political existence half a century ago, and in which a decisive part may well be played and a real influence be exerted before the end of the century by states which have yet to be born. How have the main theories of government helped to guide the men who have been constructing constitutions? What are likely to be the long-term political consequences of Communism? It is with these and allied problems that this book is concerned, and the analysis of them with which the reader is presented is exactly what the man with a real interest in politics needs today.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

COMMONSENSE ABOUT AFRICA. By Anthony Sampson. (Gollancz; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Anthony Sampson has tried to do two complementary things: to give social and historical information about the countries he discusses, and to offer explanations of, and therapeutic suggestions about, the more or less critical situation in each of them. Unfortunately he does not quite succeed

in making the second part grow out of the first. For a book of its size it is remarkably well written and fair, probably more so than anything in British journalism to date about the same subjects. It will be of most use to those who have not the time, the energy, or the will, to make unremitting studies of the African situation, but who nevertheless intend to have opinions on it. Such people will constitute the larger part of Mr Sampson's public, and this fact makes some of the defects of the book somewhat more serious than they might otherwise have been, since Africa today calls not for bare general knowledge but for policy as well.

Mr Sampson's emphasis on the physical size of the continent is welcome, and may go some way towards removing the tendency to think of Africa as a single 'country', but also to underscore the need for considering Black Africa as a Union, if enough unifying forces are found to make this practicable. The author is a little sceptical about the existence of such forces, and the first portion of the book, in which he treats of such matters, is probably the least satisfactory. The weakness here is one of sociology and anthropology. It is emphasized also by the fact that he constantly tends to argue from contrasts 'between urban and rural people, between peasants and factory workers, or between University graduates and illiterates' to an emptiness in the term 'African'. But the latter cannot be inferred from the former. The word 'European' is not without content, although such contrasts exist also in Europe. The only common factors that the author sees in Africa (not surprising if one depends on unspecified books, reports, correspondence and conversations) are 'rising pride and nationalism' and 'the conflict between the old and the new'.

But nationalism is not something that has just now arisen in Africa; it is more correct to say that it is only now being accepted and taken account of by European powers. The author does not make it clear whether or not he thinks that 'the conflict between the old and the new' is in content substantially identical throughout Africa. The world views on which legislation, religion and mores are based are in fact generally so. Chiefs, for example, are hedged round by much the same sort of political and religious defences. But that apart, wider African unity might well find a basis in common political, social and economic ambitions; and it is on some of these, rather than upon common customs and etiquette and such like things, that political unions are based. Mr Sampson has an acute sense of the difficulties in the way of such union, difficulties which are dictated in part by the fact that the struggle for independence is necessarily on a national basis.

There are few mistakes of fact in the book, but there are some doubtful speculations. Thus, the claim that European strength today has depended partly on the slave trade is not weakened by pointing to the plentiful cheap home labour in Britain in the last century, for a great deal of capital was surely derived from the West Indian plantations, and from an unequal trade in gold and diamonds through the centuries. Again, Mr Sampson does not make it really clear that economic weakness is not an alternative to colonial status. The argument from economic weakness to political possibilities is thin at some points, for if a country can be run at all with only

nominal subsidy, then it can be run from inside. Union between African states without minority interests may here be the immediate answer.

The position of 'settlers' in Africa is complex. They are there to stay; they have a predominant position in parts of East, and in Central and South, Africa, but defend their positions by artificial and oppressive means. It is a paradox of their position that they seek a secure place in Africa while generating conflict. Mr Sampson brings out clearly enough how unacceptable their attitudes are to indigenous African thought and feeling, and how it is not in their own interest even to try to preserve their place by such means as segregation and other sorts of arbitrary differentiation. With a few reservations, this account of modern African problems may be warmly recommended for the general reader.

WILLIAM E. ABRAHAM

NOTICES

FRESH HOPE FOR THE WORLD, edited and introduced by Gabriel Marcel, is a testimony to Moral Rearmament (Longmans, 16s.) 'Decisive encounters' are recorded: French Socialist, Italian anti-clerical, Indian nationalist, Norwegian Marxist, and many more, recall their awakening to the claims of Dr Buchman's movement. M. Marcel, in 'a Letter of Personal Reassurance to Three Anxious Friends', defends the distinguished patronage he gives to a movement not usually associated with Frenchmen, Catholics or philosophers.

LETTERS TO WOMEN BY SAINT IGNATIUS LOYOLA (Herder/Nelson, 63s.) is the English edition of an imposing collection of some 560 pages, edited by the distinguished Austrian Jesuit theologian, Fr Hugo Rahner, S.J. A carefully annotated edition of all the letters known to have been written or received by St Ignatius, accompanied by a historical commentary, provides what is in effect a new biography which exemplifies on the grandest scale Fr Rahner's scholarship, to which reference is made in another place in this issue.

GREEK ART AND LITERATURE, 700-530 B.C., by T. B. L. Webster (Methuen, 22s. 6d.), stresses what is known of this period, and provides a readable account for the general reader. However, such a work is bound to be unbalanced and the synthesis unproved because evidence is really only fragmentary. More illustrations should have been included. The principal virtue of the book is that it fills the hiatus between two earlier works covering the preceding and succeeding periods.

TOLSTOY, by Theodore Redpath, and MALRAUX, by Geoffrey H. Hartman, are the two latest titles in the 'Studies in Modern European Thought and Culture' series published by Bowes and Bowes (10s. 6d. each). Dr Redpath brings to his study the judgment of a literary critic as well as a serious