

A. M. LYSAGHT. *Joseph Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1766. His diary, manuscripts and collections.* Faber & Faber, London, 1971. £15.00, U.K.

Any definitive and scholarly study of the life and work of Sir Joseph Banks is bound to be of interest to New Zealand naturalists. When Sir Joseph Hooker was editing a Banks "Narrative of Cook's First Voyage," he wrote to Sir Walter Buller as follows — "Though I, through my father, who was intimate with him, have, I suppose, heard more of Banks than any other living man, I never before realised, what my father used to affirm, his great knowledge as a naturalist, and his powers." In recent years a further study by an eminent historian, the late Professor J. C. Beaglehole, has revealed in detail other facets of Banks's character and influence. In the work here reviewed another New Zealander, historian and biologist Averil M. Lysaght, has produced a sympathetic study of Banks as a young man engaged in his first foreign field work, and based on his Newfoundland — Labrador diary of 1766.

In this volume of over 500 pages the first part is biographical, dealing not only with Banks but with many of his close associates. The second part reprints the diary in full, amplified by the author's comments. Part three is supplementary papers from contemporary sources. In part four are the catalogues of specimens, all the zoological manuscripts and botanical notes, and other relevant data. Each section is fully and generously illustrated with portraits, scenes, charts, and facsimile pages, and there is a remarkably full series of illustrations of specimens. The twelve colour plates include eight of birds, five by Parkinson and three by Paillou. One of them is the type of the Greater Yellowlegs!

It would be impossible to do justice to this profoundly scholarly work in a review appropriate to a journal devoted to New Zealand birds, but lest it be thought that a diary of a journey of 200 years ago to Newfoundland and Labrador is only of peripheral interest in this context, it must be said that the young Banks emerges from this definitive and objective study as a dedicated and outstanding naturalist. The revelation of his single-handed achievement at the age of 23 shows that his influence and guidance of the team of helpers who three years later laid the foundations of botany and zoology in New Zealand, must have been a dominant one.

Dr Lysaght dedicates her book, in part, to the memory of the late Professor H. B. Kirk of Victoria University, of whom she was a student and later a teaching colleague. She was well qualified by a lifetime of study of the work of Banks in his better-known work of the Cook era to undertake the editing of the earlier journals from another part of the world. The result is a book of notable scholarship.

R. A. F.