

and their relations to the faunas of other regions in the southern hemisphere present important problems which have not yet, perhaps, been completely solved. Further, as the late Dr. Michaelsen pointed out long ago, they have, in South Africa, become differentiated into a large number of local forms, often with very restricted ranges.

In the present volume, 85 species and 44 sub-species and races are recognized. The delimitation of the areas inhabited by these and their relation to the phylogeny of the group and

to the geographical and climatic changes in the recent geological history of South Africa are discussed in a series of chapters of great interest.

A mild protest may be recorded against some of the terminology used in this volume. It is doubtful if much is gained in brevity or in clarity by the use of such words as "speciation", "sub-speciation" and "raciation". The printing is not above criticism, and surely the printers' reader ought to have known how to spell "desiccation".

W. T. C.

A New Continent

Soviet Geography:

the New Industrial and Economic Distributions of the U.S.S.R. By N. Mikhaylov. Translated from the Russian by Natalie Rothstein. Second edition revised by the author. Pp. xviii + 229. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1937.) 10s. 6d. net.

IN a foreword to this book, Sir Halford Mackinder describes it as "a political pamphlet of the indirect order". There is not much indirectness in its politics for scarcely a page omits to contrast the blessings of the Soviet régime with the backwardness of old Russia. The tables of figures, plentifully supplied, include, as if they were facts, the estimates of the second 'plan', and the reader is asked to believe that "the industry of the U.S.S.R. . . . works according to plan, and knows nothing of crises".

But when one has discounted the propaganda, there remains in this work enough of fact to arrest attention. M. Mikhaylov claims that the Soviet Government has discovered a new continent, and this is not far from the truth. Further, it is exploiting that new land as rapidly as it can profitably do so. New industrial centres have been set up, as for example in the southern Urals, with its new towns of Magnitogorsk and Khalilovo, or in the Kuznetzk basin of west Siberia. Old industries, such as the iron industry in Leningrad and the textile industry of Moscow, which formerly depended largely upon imported raw materials, are now drawing their supplies from within the Union. Irrigation works have been extended, and crops suitable for dry areas have been introduced where irrigation is not possible. Agriculture is being revolutionized through collectivization. "The fierce resistance of capitalist elements in the villages was overcome" and the "agricultural

machines", the "organization of the sovkhoses" (large-scale State agricultural enterprises), and the financial support of the Government are completing the process. It is unnecessary to continue the catalogue of development. M. Mikhaylov sets it out with an insistence and a dogmatism that make the reader wonder if it is all as nice and as satisfactory as it is pictured. Between 1913 and 1934 the "individual peasants" were reduced from 65.1 per cent of the population to 22.5 per cent and the bourgeoisie and the Kulaks have been nearly eliminated. On the other hand, the numbers of industrial workers have been doubled. This process is inevitable if one accepts the author's dictum that "the development of backward agriculture and the general industrial development of the country could not be achieved on the basis of petty individual peasant farming".

Here is the clue to the new 'Soviet geography'. To a land of boundless resources is being applied a plan of exploitation which is none the less ruthless because it is scientific. Russia as it was known in 1913 is moving eastward and northward into desert, and forest and tundra; railways, aeroplanes and ice-breakers are helping the process. How much—and relatively how little—has been done is revealed by the map showing the distribution of population. But, as M. Mikhaylov says, "the new geography of the U.S.S.R. . . . is not a spontaneous development but the accomplishment of a plan". The million people now living in the north-east quarter may some day approach more closely in number to the eleven millions in the Moscow province or the thirty-one millions in the Ukraine; but for all his assurance one can legitimately doubt if even M. Mikhaylov really believes that their lot will be one of "abundance and happiness".

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