

which, embodied in an attractive popular work, may perhaps gain more attention from the powers-that-be than when urged privately by the scientific specialist. Such points are the importance of developing the use of smoke screens on land, the use of black paint, the reduction in height of hangars and other buildings, the use of growing trees (but the absurdity of merely painting trees upon the walls of an edifice), and the dispersal of accommodation in a number of small buildings irregularly sited.

The author is sceptical about the efficacy of

ship camouflage, but it should be borne in mind that in the War of 1914-18 this was restricted to dazzle, without the necessary scientific supervision and unaided by counter-shading, and that even with these imperfections it was regarded as of distinct use by the mercantile marine and by hard-headed underwriters.

When a new edition is called for, no doubt the author will correct obvious slips and misspellings such as Kallina, Portorus and Sir A. J. Thompson; and he should really look up the history of the word 'camouflage'. JOHN GRAHAM KERR.

## INTENSIFICATION OF BRITISH AGRICULTURE

The New Farming: Continuous Cropping by the Wibberley System

By Tom Wibberley. Pp. v+171. (London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1941.) 8s. 6d. net.

**D**URING the War of 1914-18, the late T. Wibberley published his book "Farming on Factory Lines", in which he advocated more continuous systems of cropping than those generally in use. It was an interesting book, well written, showing on every page the writer's forceful personality; it certainly induced a number of people to examine the proposals even if they were not persuaded to adopt them. Much of the material had been collected while he was in Limerick as agricultural instructor, and later when he was appointed professor of agriculture at University College, Cork, the chair having been specially founded by the late Howard Harrington, who was attracted by the possibilities offered by the system.

Now in this War his son, also T. Wibberley, has revised and reissued the book in the hope that it may prove of value both in the present conditions and in the new ones that will arise when the War is ended. Under the old four-course rotation the arable land is cropped for about 38-40 months out of the 48, and is left bare or in stubble for the remaining eight to ten: broadly speaking for the space of two winters. During each of these it is very desirable that the land should be ploughed and exposed to the frost so that the soil may build itself into the crumb structure so necessary for securing a good seed bed. If the winters are dry and frosty all goes well, but often they are wet and mild and the soil becomes sticky and loses valuable nitrates by leaching. The essence of the "factory lines" methods is to grow crops during these months, so avoiding the loss of nitrate and adding to the total quantity of produce on the farm. The insertion of catch crops is an old device, and has been

much practised by the arable sheep farmers on the South Downs and by other groups of farmers, but there were sufficient distinctive features about the Wibberley methods to justify some claim for novelty.

The methods were tested in Ireland and were said to give satisfactory results. In England, on the other hand, catch cropping and continuous cropping have never come into general use on any extensive scale. Autumn-sown crops make but little growth during winter in the drier arable regions of the east, and on the other hand sufficient time must be allowed for cultivation to kill weeds. Attempts at full time cropping have not usually succeeded in these regions, nor did they on Sir E. D. Simon's farm at Leadon Court, Herefordshire, although one readily agrees that if it could be done the results might be valuable. The author's statement on p. 52 that his father in one year turned out beef and mutton to the value of £5,188 14s. 7d., with a total expenditure of £81 2s. 2d. on purchased cakes and meals must make many farmers' mouths water, especially when one is told that this was largely done with tares and winter green crops. The farmers' reaction would almost certainly be: if this young man was brought up to such a lucrative system of farming, why did he ever leave it?

The old four-course rotation has been much altered in its details, and wherever possible it is certain that farmers will grow catch crops, and increase their output of fodder in every way possible. What, however, is needed in regard to the present proposals is not more writing or propaganda about them, but to put them into practice on some actual farm so that other farmers can see what they are like in operation. If the author could bring this about he would soon be able to show whether the returns justify the labour and money involved.

E. J. RUSSELL.