

of the wireless messages sent out for two months and there the book ends, for it was compiled too early to record the last months of precarious drift, the prospective dangers off the Greenland coast and the rescue in the depths of the Arctic winter. No striking discoveries were made or indeed expected: the Arctic has yielded its chief secrets. The thrills of flying abound in every chapter, but the speed of air transport has robbed the polar narrative of its sustained interest and tended to make it solely a record of mechanical triumph.

Beyond this, two aspects of the expedition are notable. One is the extraordinary efficiency of the organization and equipment: everything worked to plan; nothing went amiss; no life nor aeroplane was lost. The other feature is the boundless enthusiasm of all who participated in the venture. One expects polar explorers to have enthusiasm

for their work, but few have so persistently recorded their feelings of enthusiasm and devotion to their national ideals. There is no criticism of plan, equipment or accomplishment: an endless song of praise and congratulation permeates the book, but there is little laughter or high spirits. The valuable scientific results receive little attention, as might be expected in a book written before the expedition had ended.

However, the new methods of polar technique which flying has introduced are well expounded, and there are useful lists of equipment, stores and instruments. Not the least interesting chapter gives the biographies of the four men. All had considerable previous polar experience and all had that longing for polar regions that once acquired is so hard to overcome. There are many excellent illustrations and two adequate maps.

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Economists Arraigned

Lament for Economics

By Barbara Wootton. Pp. 322. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1938.) 6s. net.

THE indictment is that "the economic theory of to-day is useless because it is unintelligible; because, after all their arduous studies, the economists cannot be relied upon not to give diametrically opposite diagnoses and prognoses of the same situation . . .; because the economists feed on their own tails by busying themselves with the analysis of imaginary worlds which they themselves have invented; and because they are passing off as the result of purely scientific inquiry what is in reality no more than a partisan advocacy of particular social policies".

The charge of unintelligibility having been dismissed, in Chapter ii the author examines "the relation of economic theory to the actual world", and the question why economic theory has not contributed more than it has to the solution of practical economic problems. The next two chapters discuss the claim of economics to be a science, and the accusation that economics is mere apologetics for contemporary institutions. Chapter v considers how far market equilibrium correctly interprets the optimum distribution of resources, and finally, in the light of all these discussions, the author puts forward her views as to the lines along which economics should be developed in the future.

It must now be stated that the writer of this review is one of "the economists" as defined by Mrs. Wootton. Having made every effort to overcome the resulting bias, I cannot persuade myself that this is a very useful book or one worthy of

its author. The trouble is that it attempts to combine (1) an apologia to the man in the street on behalf of economics and "the economists", (2) an attack on "the economists" and on one economist in particular, who incidentally will probably be astounded to find himself deemed so representative of the general thought of economists to-day, and (3) proposals which, however admirable in themselves, are not exactly novel and do not seem to have much logical connexion with the preceding chapters. The result is that this book is neither a deadly attack on "the economists" nor a serious contribution to the future development of economics. Most, if not all, economists will find many pages and some conclusions with which they can heartily agree and much with which they will disagree, but they will find little of which they are not perfectly well aware. The general reader may gain a better knowledge of much of which he is imperfectly aware, but at the end his ideas as to "the economists", their aims and the sort of work they do will probably be even more curious and less exact than they are at present. Even the general lines of the proposals in the concluding chapter can be and have been argued more forcibly on very different premises.

As Mrs. Wootton knows, and in part admits, self-satisfaction is not a besetting sin of "the economists", and many fully share her troubles and sorrows. But this book seems to have been written in something very like mere exasperation, and, however pardonable, exasperation is not conducive to well-balanced and constructive thought or to enlightened vision.

J. W. F. ROWE.