

the wall was confined to a few of the larger towns and soon fell into disuse, while the continental characteristics were more often retained in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Changes in siege warfare by gunpowder and artillery were responsible for the conversion of the old towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This was the time of beginning congestion, and Dr Dickinson corrects the widespread fallacy that medieval towns were lacking in open spaces. In fact the medieval towns contained a considerable agricultural element. In Poitiers, for instance, each house—and medieval houses were mostly one-family houses—had its orchard. The second or Industrial phase of urban expansion is marked by the greatest increases in population the Western world has experienced, and, above all, by the great concentration of people in towns on the advent of the railway and the steam engine during the nineteenth century. The third phase is the post-1919 period marked by the addition of the internal combustion engine.

Every continental city thus reveals a crust-like growth from its medieval centre, through Renaissance and Baroque extensions, expansions in the nineteenth century to the inter-war period of the twentieth; the last two phases being characteristic—in Professor Tout's words—of 'few builders of towns, but an infinite number of builders of individual houses and streets'. Dr Dickinson himself recognises that much of what he has written in 1939 is already past history, for only very few of the historic cities he describes have been spared by the bombs of the last war, but the reconstruction of these cities will have to be based on the existing pattern and its origins. The problem which the modern planner has to solve is how urban life, divorced as it is from soil and country, can be made dignified by satisfying elementary human needs of air, light, space and the requirements of modern social services. That town and regional planning should learn from the geographer, and that it must be constructive rather than permissive, as in the last fifty years, merely excluding industry from certain areas, confining it to others and separating residential from obnoxious non-residential uses, is, perhaps, the most important conclusion of a work well supplied with illustrations and diagrams, and an extensive bibliography.

ROLAND HILL

**ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION.** By Raymond Firth. (Watts; 18s.)

Professor Raymond Firth in these lectures given in the University of Birmingham, the first of a series founded by the Rationalist Press Association, sets out to give, as the title of his book informs us, the elements of social organisation. As an anthropologist with field experience in the Pacific, he uses observations made on the material he collected there as the basis of an analysis of the factors which go to make up human society.

In his introduction he tells us that the main object of the foundation of this series of lectures, is the 'illustration of the scientific approach to the problems of civilised society'. This obligation he conscientiously sets out to fulfil. In his first chapter he gives a concise account of the subject matter which calls for the attention of the field worker, in terms of the concepts which may be considered to give rise to the observed facts. No one reading this book must expect to find a full account of any given society. That is not its aim. Professor Firth has looked at 'societies' and has deduced what are the ideas that lie behind appearances.

The chapters on 'the social framework of primitive art', 'moral standards and social organisation' and 'religion in social reality' are the most lively and controversial. He sees art, morals and religion as *functions* of society: their *raison d'être* being the welding together of a group of people into a whole. The implication seems to be that the phenomena of civilisation are devices for forcing man, who is naturally asocial, into being a 'social' creature. This is an assumption which Professor Firth does not seem to be aware of making as he does not discuss it.

The concluding chapter on religion in social reality is of value in presenting the so-called 'scientific view of religion.' This purports to be an estimation of the part that religious beliefs and behaviour play in the overt life of a people. Professor Firth sums up in a final paragraph his own *credo*: 'A comprehensive hypothesis here is that religion is a form of human art. The understanding of religion is most fully obtained not by embracing its symbolic system, but by scrutinising it. It is then seen as a symbolic product of human desires in a social milieu'.

As an introduction to one method of approaching the problems of social organisation and thereby stimulating the reader to examine his own approach, the book can be warmly recommended.

DORIS LAYARD

THE FILM IN EDUCATION. By Andrew Buchanan. (Phoenix House; 25s.)

This will undoubtedly become, for a long time, the standard work on its subject in this country. In so far as it has been written 'right up to the minute', it will date; but only till the second and successive editions. And these will be demanded by the enduring qualities of interpretation and constructive stimulation that underlie the ground-plan of facts on which the book has been built. It is an altogether comprehensive work. Whatever one's 'non-entertainment' interest in film, there is a definitive chapter here to serve it: the technique of learning through the eye; the diversity of child (and adult) audience; the his-