ing in Meeting, to college students, on the importance of individual effort. "Take the case of Methuselah," he said. "We have it on good authority that he lived 969 years. Yet, so far as we know, longevity was his only accomplishment worth recording."

The more modest 85 years vouchsafed to Rufus Jones were packed with subtle achievement of a nature that has lately been all too rare. David Hinshaw has not merely appreciated its significance, but has deftly and sympathetically made this clear for all to understand. His book will be as permanent as the subject with which it is deeply and reverently concerned.

HERBERT HOOVER and FELIX MORLEY

ROOSEVELT'S LETTERS

F. D. R.: His Personal Letters, edited by Elliott Roosevelt, assisted by Joseph P. Lash. *New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. $10.00*

In these two stout volumes, containing Franklin D. Roosevelt's personal letters for the period 1928–1945, one finds no such sensation as would accompany the publication of the unexpurgated personal letters of his successor. (Would not "The Anti-Chesterfield" be a promising title for the epistles of Harry S. Truman?)

The multiple ghosts who hovered over the preparation of Roosevelt's state papers were not pressed into service for the preparation of these informal communications. Stripped of ectoplasm, there is nothing very arresting or remarkable in the content or style of these letters. Moreover, as Elliott Roosevelt explains in his introduction, this is by no means a full collection of Roosevelt's letters. Material prejudicial to friendly relations with foreign countries; material relating to patronage and to applications and recommendations for government posts; documents containing derogatory remarks concerning the loyalty, character and integrity of individuals have been omitted.

Still the correspondence, even in this bowdlerized form, possesses considerable historical interest. One finds a memorandum for Mrs. Roosevelt regarding the shutting off of oil shipments to Japan, dated November 13, 1940, and reading as follows:

> The real answer which you *can not* use is that if we forbid oil shipments to Japan, Japan will increase her purchases of Mexican oil and furthermore may be driven by actual necessity to a descent on the Dutch East Indies. At this writing, we all regard such action on our part as an encouragement to the spread of war in the Far East.

This seems to be an adequate characterization of the significance and purpose of the American Government's order of July 25, 1941, suspending all financial and commercial dealings with Japan.

Roosevelt's attitude, apparently shaken only in the last weeks of his life, of staking the peace on trust in the good intentions of the Soviet Government is reflected in a letter to Thomas W. Lamont, of November 12, 1942. Lamont had delivered a speech denouncing any Americans so churlish and suspicious as to doubt the enduring character of Soviet-American cooperation, before a meeting of the Council of American-Soviet Friendship, one of the leading candidates for the Attorney-General's subversive list in later years.

Roosevelt congratulated Lamont on his "excellent speech" and related an unpublished incident of the period when Litvinov was in the United States negotiating American recognition of the Soviet Government. Trying to console Roosevelt for some difficult hurdles in the discussions, Litvinov suggested that in 1920 America was one hundred per cent capitalistic, while Russia was at the other extreme, zero.

In the subsequent thirteen years, the Soviet Union, according to Litvinov, had risen to twenty, while the United States under the early New Deal had gone to a position of eighty. Litvinov professed his "real belief" that in the next twenty years the two countries would come still closer, the Soviet Union to forty and America to sixty, thereby making understanding much more possible. Roosevelt ended his letter to Lamont:

"Perhaps Litvinov's thoughts of nine years ago are coming true."

In the light of 1951 neither Litvinov nor Roosevelt seems to deserve any laurels as a prophet.

There are two cordial letters to the late Harold J. Laski, left-wing British Labor Party theoretician whose outspoken admiration for many aspects of Soviet communism was only mildly tempered by an occasional yearning wish that the Soviet regime would be just a little more tolerant of critics and dissenters. In one of these letters, dated January 16, 1945, Roosevelt writes to Laski: "Our goal is, as you say, identical for the long-range objectives."

The collection contains many letters addressed to members of European royal families, including one to the young King of Yugoslavia with a rather amusing tincture of condescension:

> My dear Peter:
> It is good to have your note and I can assure you that I am thinking much of the day when you and your wife will be going back to Belgrade. I think things are shaping up well and I am glad indeed that you see Mr. Churchill and can partake of his great wisdom.

This letter was dated November 2, 1944. Despite the assurance that "things are shaping up well," Peter never did make the return trip to Belgrade. Indeed, one of the strongest impressions which one derives from these letters is the author's almost amazing lack of anticipation of the perils involved in the tremendous postwar power of Soviet communism. This subject is never even referred to.

Roosevelt displayed a persistence worthy of a better cause in refusing to modify his "unconditional surrender" slogan, a slogan that seems to have grown out of his garbled recollection of an episode in Civil War history. He associated unconditional surrender with Appomatox, whereas the phrase was actually used by Grant in connection with the reduction of Fort Donelson.

A memorandum to Cordell Hull of January 24, 1944, expresses concern over the plight of the people of Indo-China and favors replacement of French rule by a trusteeship system. But nowhere is there any expression of concern for the fate of the peoples of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Roosevelt assures a Polish-American Congressman that "there were no secret commitments made by me at Teheran and I am quite sure that other members of my party made none either."

But this is not what Molotov told the Polish Prime Minister Mikolajczyk in Moscow in 1944 without eliciting contradiction from Churchill and Averell Harriman, who had also been present at Teheran.

Perhaps the best illustration of the haze of profound self-delusion through which Roosevelt viewed the postwar world is to be found in the memorandum of a luncheon conversation of November 13, 1942, in which he developed his ideas on this subject.

There were to be four "policemen," the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China, charged with keeping peace. All other countries would be disarmed and the "policemen" would keep close watch to see that they did not arm secretly. "Russia would be charged with keeping peace in the Western [*sic*] Hemisphere, and the United States and China would be charged with keeping the peace in the Far East."

The question what would happen if two of the "policemen" started to shoot up the other two never seems to have occurred to the President. Indeed, an appropriate subtitle for this collection of letters would be the saying of the Swedish statesman Oxenstierna: ". . . with how little wisdom the world is governed."

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

TOO MUCH READING?

The Public School Scandal, by Earl Conrad. *New York: John Day. $3.50*

If there is a public school "scandal" thousands of American parents and observers of the school system would say that it consists in an increasing failure to transmit to pupils what Pestalozzi called "the disciplines of word, number and form." This is not the scandal Mr. Conrad has in mind — quite the contrary; according to him the schools are producing delinquents, truants, and candidates for mental institutions because children are made to go to school at too early an age, forced to read too soon, and suffer from "school fatigue" brought on by stern discipline and an exhaustive load of homework. He is especially incensed — his white heat never lessens throughout the book — by forced early reading, a matter first brought to his attention through the reading difficulties of his own small son in a New York City school. (Although the book pretends to deal with a national situation, Mr. Conrad's experiences seem to be centered almost entirely in New York.)

Unfortunately for his argument, most modern educators agree with him that it is damaging to force children to read until they are ready; indeed, his own quotations from schoolmen show that pupils are not expected or even encouraged to read in the first two grades. His dramatic indictment of the national "crime" of producing maladjustments among seven-, eight-, and nine-year-olds by excessive homework doesn't, to my mind, make much sense unless he can show where, in what schools, this age group is given homework. I think it would be unusual to find any public school in this country where regular home-study assignments are given before the 5th or 6th grade, that is, at about the age of eleven or twelve. Throughout the book the author is busy bringing up heavy artillery which goes off with the reverberation of a cap-pistol.

Mr. Conrad has some hardy prejudices, including one against the Catholic Church. He is not content with pointing out the undoubted fact that the parochial schools often dump their more difficult pupils on the public school, or that the Church is a great believer in censorship; he must go on to suggest that Catholics who serve on school boards rarely believe in public education but are only trying to advance the Church's viewpoint and that the Church is willing, in its desire for power, to sacrifice the schooling and well-being of its own children.

He doesn't seem to care much for free enterprise and hints vaguely that Business, that old ogre, is behind the nasty plot to teach the young to read; he suggests that the motto of business is "teach 'em to read — and they'll buy." He is adept at finding bias in textbooks. He quotes from a book which described the freed slaves after the Civil War as being "like carefree children" who thought that freedom "meant one long vacation," and finds that this accurate statement constitutes "prejudice against Negroes." Because New York's Superintendent of Schools, William Jansen, once wrote in a textbook that the natives of Africa are "backward" he is charged with holding "in contempt" the peoples of colonial countries. (This last item is "documented" with quotations from the Teachers Union and the New York *Daily Compass*.)

No, this sort of thing obviously won't do. For all its air of presenting an exposé, despite the author's breathless tone of sensation, the book is irrelevant to the great problems confronting current public school education. Occasionally he puts his finger on a real weakness — the blind faith in tests and measurements, the inadequate program of mental hygiene, the ineptitude of Parent-Teacher Associations — but the great weakness of the book is that he seems uninterested in essential education. The immediate task of the public schools is to develop the radical new techniques and methods whereby all pupils — bright and dull, rapid learners and slow — may be reached with genuine education, not some watery substitute labeled "Life Adjustment" or "Training in Skills." Mr. Conrad seems unaware that the real scandal of the public schools is that educators have ceased to believe in the efficacy of education.

MORTIMER SMITH

GLAMOR GIRL OF WAR

War In Korea: The Report of a Woman Combat Correspondent, by Marguerite Higgins. *New York: Doubleday. $2.75*

This is a mean little war, an ugly war, that we're fighting in Korea; and the late Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker didn't think it was any kind of war for a woman. And the fact is that Marguerite Higgins, a slip of a girl (and a pretty girl, at that) with blond hair and a pert, turned-up nose, does look as though she'd be more at home in a cocktail lounge, making polite beebly-babbly, than in a foxhole. There's a further fact about Maggie Higgins that Walker didn't reckon with, however. Although she looks (and frequently acts) like a sweet, simpering thing, she has more stamina, more determination, and more drive than most men. And more guts, too.

Walker expelled Maggie from Korea in the first month of the war, and she raised such unladylike hell around the Dai Ichi Building, then General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, that MacArthur was forced to reverse his Eighth Army Commander's order. So, with only an