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ALTHOUGH the social sciences have attained a well-defined and expanding place in most college curriculums, relatively few offer comprehensive courses in research methods and procedure. Dr. Gee has been teaching such a course at the University of Virginia and this book has been developed in connection with it. He has undertaken, with a good degree of success, to assemble under one cover the best thinking of a large number of authorities who have attempted to define the scope and meaning of science in general, and of social science in particular. Early chapters are devoted to the definition of social science and the delineation of subject-matter fields. Two chapters are then devoted to the meaning of research and the scientific method. The last half of the book describes the meaning, application, and limitations of the case, statistical, historical, survey, and experimental methods, as they apply to research in the social sciences.

Throughout the book the author depends on many quotations and excerpts. In general, these are well-selected and pertinent quotations which contribute to the subject under discussion and, at the same time, accent the differences in viewpoint of leading authorities. This reviewer can detect no obvious slant or bias in the selection of quotations which would suggest adherence to any particular school of thought. As a book of readings, it would facilitate the reader who wished to learn what the authorities have written on particular points without extensive searching and selection. The quotations are, in general, long enough to present the full meaning of their writers without the risk of superficiality or the danger of distorted meaning which could result from shorter quotations.

Dr. Gee is aware that the most obvious criticism applicable to the book is that of excessive quota-

tion. His justification of this approach is that no one person could speak with authority on so wide a range of intellectual concern as the book attempts to cover. Although this is a defensible position in many respects, some measure of synthesis and perspective could have been obtained by restating in summary fashion at the end of sections and chapters the consensus of the authors quoted. This has been done in places but the instances are all too few. This limitation is no doubt alleviated somewhat when the book is used as a text for a course, and class discussion is used as a means of clarification. But a research worker who is seeking to improve his understanding and technique of a particular study at hand would be less fortunate. But the practicing researcher would gain valuable perspective from the book even though he would still have the problem of deciding upon the application to his particular project of the several research methods described. The chapters on the statistical and survey methods are of most interest to the agricultural economist. But as about equal weight is given to other methods of approaches to social science research, the book is not open to the usual criticism of similar books which place primary emphasis upon a single method.

The last chapter discusses the place of social science research in universities and colleges and in private and public research agencies. Problems of administration and financial limitations are mentioned, as well as the relative merits of individual and group research. Persons engaged in governmental research will probably feel that more attention could well have been given to the contributions made by this type of research, and they would also have welcomed an appraisal by an outsider of its shortcomings and limitations.

William H. Scofield