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Book Reviews

British Economics Statistics. By C. F. CARTER and A. D. ROY. Cambridge University Press, New York. 188 pages. 1954. \$4.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the British National Institute of Economics and Social Research in November 1950 initiated a project called "An Examination of British Economic Statistics." The main purpose was to appraise "the statistical information (a) required for or (b) actually used or available for, the formation of economic policy in the United Kingdom." This is the report of that project. The study was carried out by C. F. Carter of Queens University, Belfast, and A. D. Roy of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, under the direction of a committee of leading economists and statisticians from British Universities.

The work is similar in many respects to the survey of the statistical agencies of the Federal Government of the United States made in 1948 by Frederick C. Mills and Clarence D. Long, then working with the National Bureau of Economic Research, for the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, commonly known as the "Hoover Commission."

The study was stimulated by two developments: (1) The increased use made of statistics in policy decisions, both public and private, and (2) the rapid growth in the volume of statistics made available, particularly during and since World War II. The latter development has been due largely to the collection of many additional data for use in administering governmental programs. Statistics from this source have been adapted for many uses for which they were not originally intended. Moreover, the growth of economic statistics is described as unequal in different fields and somewhat haphazard from the viewpoint of supplying the information most needed in making policy decisions. Therefore, a careful study of how resources available for carrying out statistical services can be used most effectively fills an important need.

The authors point out that their report differs from one that might be made by a Royal Commission appointed by the Government. They were not able to observe the use actually made of statistics in policy making or to learn how policy decisions in fact are made. Nor did they have access to all of the unpublished statistics available to the Government for the making of policy decisions. But this shortcoming is not large. The authors and the members of the committee under whose direction the study was made at one time or another have held responsible governmental positions.

In the first three chapters the authors describe the study in general terms, discuss the relation of statistics to economic and social policies, and summarize problems that they later consider in detail. The report starts out on a sound basis by recognizing that in policy-making information other than that of a statistical nature is required. The seven chapters that follow present case studies of the use of statistics and their adequacy in relation to policies and programs concerned with housing, coal, development areas, agricultural price fixing, the balance of external payments, and the general balance of the economy. The last four chapters deal with the quality of economic statistics, the presentation and availability of statistics, and the organization of statistical intelligence.

The book includes a useful reference table of principal British economic statistics and their sources and contains a summary index of the authors' main proposals and their suggestions for improvement of economic statistics. An extensive bibliography of references cited is included.

This is a useful reference book for those who are interested in improving the coverage and usefulness of economic statistics. It emphasizes throughout that to be useful statistics must be developed to serve a purpose or need. In other words, statistics must provide facts that will help

people in making decisions. The book should attract the interest of those who use economic statistics in making policy decisions as well as those who are responsible for making statistics

of this kind available. The presentation is clear and effective. Laymen will find it readily comprehensible. At the same time it is thought-provoking for the social scientist.

R. P. Christensen

Land Problems and Policies. By V. WEBSTER JOHNSON and RALEIGH BARLOWE. McGraw-Hill, New York. 400 pages. 1954. \$6.50.

THIS BOOK deals with the field of inquiry known as land economics. It pays its respects to orthodox economic subjects but its primary focus is on such institutional factors as population, property rights, public programs and policies, and the historical analysis of these institutions. The book clearly indicates that these are the things that are most influential in determining how people organize to use their resources. The authors discuss problems which have, in fact, been of major concern to people and their government.

Land Problems and Policies includes current subjects, such as soil conservation, multiple-purpose resource development, land resource planning, and land reform. It is comprehensive, and it carries for each problem an array of pertinent information—facts, ideas, program results, leads to other research, conclusions of the authors. The result is a book that has some of the characteristics of a collection of essays rather than a cold, logical, and systematic treatment of the problems.

The work could be used as a text for advanced college courses in land economics. Agricultural economists, particularly those who are concerned with recent trends in the profession and the significance of our results, would be well advised to give attention to this book. Reading it might

well be the occasion for an appraisal of trends and emphasis in the agricultural economics profession. The senior author has been in the midst of land policy formulation and programs for more than 25 years, the junior author for 15, and the influence of L. C. Gray is both acknowledged and apparent. The book, therefore, deals with issues which, in the minds and experience of these three men, have been of major significance and have received major attention over the years.

Agricultural economics without question will ultimately be judged by how much it can help people to solve their problems. Yet, in the last 15 years, agricultural economists have paid less and less attention to the vital problems and issues here treated. The refinements in marginal analysis, in particular, have little to offer in devising solutions for land problems and guiding the formulation of land policies. Yet decisions are always being made, and land policy is continually being formed or modified.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that agricultural economists are abdicating their responsibilities in an area in which their training, research, and judgment should be of value. The recent reorganization of the United States Department of Agriculture and the reorientation of work in land economics is not reassuring in this regard.

Raymond J. Penn

Methods of Crop Forecasting. By Fred H. Sanderson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 259 pages. 1954. \$5.

IT IS A PLEASURE to learn that Dr. Sanderson's award-winning dissertation, written 10 years ago, has been brought up to date and published. As the publishers accurately state, "this is

the first book to present a survey and critical appraisal of crop forecasting methods, with a discussion of the relations between the various approaches and an evaluation of their relative

merits." Why this should be so is hard to understand, considering that crop forecasting is as old as civilization itself and has long been a well-established government activity in many countries. The United States alone has a century of experience in the field. Everyone interested in the subject is indeed fortunate that this first effort should be such an outstanding piece of work.

As the title indicates, the author has concentrated attention on one subject and has not attempted to cover the entire field of agricultural statistics. But it would be a mistake to leave the impression that this is all that is covered. A chapter on "Advances in the Design of Sample Surveys" provides an excellent review of modern sampling theory. A chapter on the "Validity of a Forecasting Formula" and another on "Testing Weather-Crop Hypotheses" are splendid expositions of multiple regression methods. They can be read with profit by anyone interested in those techniques, regardless of the field of application. Methods of appraising the significance of a fitted equation are treated exceptionally well.

The material relating specifically to crop forecasting covers in admirable style problems in estimating crop acreages, the use of subjective condition reports and their relation to yields, objective estimates of final yields, and objective yield forecasts from plant observations and weather data. Although many of the illustrations and examples are drawn from experience in the United States, the general approach is much broader, and frequent references are made to work in other countries.

The author has achieved a happy blend of the viewpoints of scientist and operating agency. When criticisms of methods currently in use in this country are made, they are more restrained than some that can be found elsewhere. His recommendations for possible improvements show a grasp of the practical problems with which an operating agency is faced, and are not in the ivory-tower category.

But Dr. Sanderson makes plain his belief that "greater accuracy and freedom from bias can only be achieved if the traditional crop-reporting methods based on the returns of crop correspondents are supplemented to an increasing extent by crop

forecasts based on objective measurements of the weather and the growing crop" and that "interview sampling of nonrespondents to acreage surveys would also increase the reliability of the forecasts." He should be glad to learn that funds to conduct the type of research he advocates have been made available since his manuscript was prepared for publication. Work has been in progress for about a year.

Many readers will be interested in the comments on "the search for weather and crop cycles." Dr. Sanderson concludes that "there is no conclusive evidence that any of the periodicities hitherto suggested are real. All that can be said is that most of our weather series are not strictly random series, but show a significant degree of serial correlation or interdependence of successive observations. Whether this serial correlation is indicative of hidden periodicities or merely the result of a persistence tendency, it is impossible to say." He also concludes that "long-range weather forecasts cannot be expected to be sufficiently specific to serve as a basis for forecasting the yield of crops which are chiefly dependent on weather conditions prevailing during a few critical days."

Anyone who is interested in crop-yield statistics, whether user of data or actively engaged in crop estimating, may read this stimulating book with profit. The reviewer has no hesitation in recommending it to coworkers in the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service and to all users of crop statistics. The former will get an opportunity to view their work in a perspective that can be lost all too easily in the routine of day-to-day operations; the latter will become better acquainted with the complexities of a problem that is too often overly simplified by the uninitiated.

The style is lucid and readable. The mathematical formulas that appear in a few places are not troublesome. The reader can easily skip them, if he chooses, without seriously interrupting a chain of thought. But the little effort needed to interpret them will be well spent. For those who wish to pursue the subject further a good bibliography follows each chapter.

Walter A. Hendricks

THE ROLE THAT LAW PLAYS in the conservation of renewable natural resources is often overlooked by agricultural economists. Professor Schulz's work explores this role and in the process casts some grave doubts on the wisdom, when applied to resource use in Pennsylvania, of placing sole reliance on the classical economic doctrine that owners pursuing their own best interests assure full utilization, development, and conservation. His work also discloses a voluminous maze of conservation agencies and laws, sometimes conflicting, overlapping, and ineffective.

This book, sponsored by the Conservation Foundation, breaks new ground. For the first time, all laws—Federal, State, and local—pertaining to resource conservation in a State are carefully examined. The study depicts the value of an exhaustive analysis of the whole body of conservation law, as contrasted with generalizing about some segment of a field of law prevalent over the whole country. Under the latter approach, readers do not become aware of the immensely complex interrelationship of the whole pattern of laws that impinge on the problem.

Conservation of renewable natural resources is defined to mean utilization over all the future, not just until the present supply is exhausted. Resources dealt with, and around which the subject matter is arranged, include game, fish, water, forests, soil, and recreational values. Pennsylvania laws and pertinent Federal statutes relating to each are digested and commented upon. Also described in detail are the organization and operation of State and Federal agencies that administer these laws.

When reading this book one is humbled by the unitary nature of the conservation problem and then saddened by the slow progress made in integrating remedial measures. Activities of agencies charged with conservation of fish resources, as the author points out, are affected by power and navigational uses of streams, by urban, mine, and industrial pollution of waters, by inadequate forest cover on upper watersheds, and by failure to stabilize soils on farms. But conservation planning and management have often failed to reflect this unitary relationship. In achieving better integration, law can make a vital contribution.

Adequate conservation laws, of course, are neither self-enacting nor are they self-executing, once on the books. Laws must be supported by the people both before and after adoption, and traditions of economic freedom are highly allergic to governmental regulations. But such regulations have been accepted, though often reluctantly and at times belatedly.

Although erosion has wasted soils for decades, Pennsylvania only recently decided that soil needed aid by way of legislation—that laws were useful conservation tools. All efforts to control hunting failed until the virtual extinction of certain species made the critical situation clear. Forest conservation has been repeatedly frustrated by court decisions.

Professor Schulz points to the lack of effective coordination of natural resource planning and administration as a major weakness. Although more than 30 State departments, boards, and commissions are concerned with phases of resource conservation, no one agency has authority to integrate their activities. In his last chapter corrective measures are suggested—a model act for conservation administration. This act, reflecting the unitary nature of the conservation problem, proposes a Department of Conservation of 8 divisions, with the necessary power and discretion to plan and carry out a comprehensive conservation program.

This is a unique book and a welcome addition to conservation literature. Conservationists, administrators, lawyers, legislators, economists, researchers, and others cognizant of the role of law in conservation will find it both interesting and informative. An excellent introductory chapter summarizes the major findings and conclusions. It is not a book that one will read from cover to cover in one sitting. Several chapters, consisting largely of digests of existing laws, are heavy and tedious and may be skimmed over by the casual reader. When reading this book, one becomes aware of the lack of knowledge, first, as to how laws actually operate and, second, as to ways to make laws serve better. We are indebted to Professor Schulz for pioneering in new fields.

Erling D. Solberg

PILGRIMS IN PARAGUAY is a combination of a sociological-anthropological study and a record of one of the most heroic colonization projects of recent times. About two-fifths of the book is given to analyses of Mennonite colonies in other South American countries—Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. But the main portion of the book concerns itself with the Mennonite colonies in Paraguay, which are the focus of this review. Of the 16,000 Mennonites in South America, around 12,000 are in Paraguay.

This colonization began in 1926, when a group of Mennonites left Canada and settled in the Chaco, the deep interior of Paraguay. The last great influx of new settlers was in 1947, when refugees from Russia and a few other European countries came by the hundreds into Paraguay. Some of the refugees were filtered in among established colonies, and others established new colonies of their own. There are now 7 main colonies.

Mennonites are the most successful colonizers in the world, for two reasons—first, probably, their religious conviction that adversity is a perquisite to righteousness, and second, their simple unostentatious life. Because of these two qualities, Mennonites succeed where many another people would fail. In the Paraguayan Chaco, however, they have truly been put to the test. This book, a critical review by a Mennonite scholar, does not claim that their experiences have been completely successful.

They chose Paraguay because the Paraguayan Government would grant their desire not to be involved in war, or indeed in any other type of violence, and to live approximately as a government within a government. Their colonies are little conditioned by the Government of Paraguay, and because of their isolation they are influenced little by indigenous populations, whether Indian or Paraguayan. They are pioneers, as Mennonites always have been, not only because they moved into an undeveloped agricultural area, but because,

being so isolated from the economy of the world, even to a large extent from that of Paraguay, the story of their development is to a considerable degree a recapitulation of the developing economy of Western society.

In the first place, they had to live upon what the local environment and its resources produced. Even horses and mules were not available; they had to break wild cattle as work animals. Their simple farm implements, although not as primitive as those used in some other parts of Paraguay, were as primitive as any used by American pioneers 200 years ago. Their processing and manufacturing enterprises are still mostly in the handicraft or domestic industry stage, and they market little of what they produce.

The story of the Paraguayan colonies is therefore an interesting study in the economic development of society. With all the fortitude in the world, backed by deep religious convictions, these people could not triumph completely over forbidding physical and ecological conditions—a semi-arid area with poorly distributed rainfall, a spring climate in which crops may have to be replanted 3 or 4 times, infestations of grasshoppers that reproduce prolifically in surrounding wooded areas, and physical isolation in terms of market contacts.

As the author says, and I think correctly, "The most significant achievements of the Mennonites are not in the realm of material progress or technical advancement. They are in the psychological and spiritual values. Mennonites in Paraguay today enjoy 3 priceless possessions—bread, freedom, and peace." Nevertheless an amazing amount of material and technical advance has been made by the colonies, and it is a growing leaven in Paraguayan economy. If one reads this story he will be convinced that none but Mennonites could have accomplished so much.

Carl C. Taylor