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BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to Australian Economic Statistics, G. R. Palmer. Melbourne: Macmillan & Co., 1963. Pp. 328, 55s. 0d.

This book satisfies a need, long felt by persons concerned with the description and analysis of economic events. It has been written as a "comprehensive and critical guide to Australian statistics, which discusses the nature, limitations and pitfalls of particular statistical series". It is aimed also "For the guidance of the general user of statistics . . . at a fairly comprehensive, though not exhaustive, treatment of Australian statistics".

An introductory chapter discusses the historical development of Australian statistics and the organizations collecting them. Chaper 2 presents a summary and listing of Australian statistical publications. The remaining eleven chapters discuss available statistics under the headings of population and vital statistics, the work force, the income of persons, prices, manufacturing industries, primary industries, overseas trade and the balance of payments, banking and other private finance, public finance, miscellaneous statistics, and national income and social accounts.

The book has been written in a text-book style. It seems that the author has primarily been interested in preparing for an elementary course in statistics a comprehensive reference to sources of Australian economic statistics. The book is not the critical guide that the author claims in the preface. From the reviewer's experience, more criticism of the work force statistics could be made. More could also be said about existing production indices, their value and their need for improvement. It is to be hoped that a new edition containing a more critical guide to Australian economic statistics will be prepared.

This book is intended for practical use. It provides useful information on sources of data and could also be of value in assessing the use that can be made of a particular series. It is a worthwhile acquisition for statistical workers.

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Sydney: V. C. N. Blight, Government Printer—1965