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Business Statistics by Melvin T. Copeland

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left to the handling of extremists, and we confess to disappointment at finding M. Guyot ranging himself alongside the *laissez faire* disputants, who cry "Hands off the liquor trade!"

It is easy to argue against the extremist, but in so doing it appears difficult to avoid the opposite extreme. Vehemence and bias are apt to do duty for reasoning and truth. Thus M. Guyot comes perilously near suggesting that the British nation owes its position in the vanguard of civilisation to roast beef, beer, and whisky. This, of course, is mere rhetoric, but it lays the writer open to ridicule from the prohibitionist, and does not help the ordinary person to an understanding of the real merits of the drink question. This is not the only passage in the book which is more picturesque than weighty.

The fact is, of course, that alcoholic drink is neither wholly good nor wholly bad. If its abuse does not call for such a drastic remedy as complete prohibition, as many people demand, neither does the principle of freedom or justice require that society should allow its members to get drunk as often as they like, as other people seem to think. There can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who studies the facts that, at any rate in some countries, the existence of unrestricted drinking facilities is harmful to the State. Nor can any doubt be entertained by anyone who knows the history of the drink traffic in the United Kingdom during the past three years that restrictive action by the State can be effective and beneficial. This is not to say that, in any given circumstances, the State can go on restricting consumption to vanishing point and still produce satisfactory results. This has been demonstrated recently in this country, where popular demand has led to a relaxation of the restriction on the output of beer.

We do not wish to suggest that M. Guyot's book is all declamation. It is not. But it is primarily a hot counter-attack on the "*anti-alcoholomanes*," and we could wish that he had written a better-balanced book.

A.D.W.

11.—*Business Statistics*. Harvard Business Studies, Vol. III. Edited by Melvin T. Copeland, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Marketing, Harvard University. xii + 696 pp., 8vo. Harvard University Press, 1917. Price \$3.75.

"Business Statistics," it is stated in the preface, "are numerical statements of facts, exclusive of financial accounts, which are used in business administration . . . (1) external statistics, generally publicly available, which indicate the general trend of business and market conditions, and (2) internal statistics, which are concerned with the private operations of an individual business establishment. . . . Internal statistics include those obtained from the sales, advertising, and factory reports of an individual firm or company."

The volume begins with three sections on statistical methods. The first, by Dr. Copeland, deals with schedules of enquiry, averages, modes, &c.; the second, by Mr. G. P. Watkins, is a quasi-scientific

and quite useless classification of statistical units ; while the third, by Mr. Wesley C. Mitchell, gives a useful account of index numbers, rather over the head of those not already trained in statistics. Four sections follow on statistical indices of business conditions. Dr. Copeland discusses the use of statistics of imports, exports, immigration, bank clearings, railroad earnings, idle cars, new building, business failures, stock market, money rates, pig iron, copper, print cloth, silk, tin, hides and leather, and crops as indices of business conditions, reviews various methods of forecasting, and suggests a method (based on ten-year averages) for obtaining indices which allow for normal growth and seasonal fluctuations. Mr. Mitchell follows with a perfunctory article on business cycles ; the method of obtaining crop reports in the United States is described ; and Mr. Bruce D. Mudgett points out the current sources of information in produce markets.

The third part of the book deals in 224 pages with sales and advertising statistics, and includes thirty-two articles on various problems from "Printers' Ink," "System," &c. ; many of these articles are loosely connected with statistics, but they contain many useful hints for the business man in the investigation of possible sales territories, while a couple of pages on "graphs for the sales manager" will be found suggestive. Part IV devotes 149 pages to factory statistics, embracing fifteen articles from the technical press, covering stores, production, and wages ; some of these articles are very slight, but attention may be directed to those on "checking losses in the store-room," "the perpetual inventory in practical stores operations," "hiring and firing," and "a graphical daily balance in manufacture." The concluding part treats in 141 pages with statistics for the chief executive and includes twelve articles, one of which deals with mining, three with railways, and one with telephones, while the others are of a general character.

The obvious criticism on a book of this nature is that it is useful raw material for class work, but that it does not meet the needs of a scientific treatise. There is, for example, a conspicuous contrast between the space given to sales and advertising problems and that assigned to factory statistics, while not enough use is made of the literature of the engineering and steel industries. What is required of the trained economist is that he should digest the abundant literature of the technical press, extract its general principles, and expound the variations needed for application to different industries—in fact, a considerable elaboration of the brief introductions to the last three parts of this book.

H.W.M.

12.—*Other New Publications.**

Bachi (Riccardo). *L'Italia economica nel 1916*. La ripercussioni della guerre italiana ed europea sull' economia nazionale. Anno. viii. xvi + 394 pp., 8vo. Citta di Castello, 1917. Price 7 lire.

[The eighth issue of this important annual reviews the commercial industrial, agricultural and financial life of Italy and its economic activities generally during the year, and forms a valuable book of reference.]

* See also "Additions to the Library," page 145, *sqq.*