

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS

I. BOOK REVIEWS

THE PROBLEM OF ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS. By Harold J. Laski. *Smith College Studies in History*, Vol. IV. No. 1, 1918. Pp. 64.

In the space of sixty-four pages Mr. Laski examines the prevailing system of administrative centralization and finds it wanting. The centralized democratic state has not fulfilled the expectations of nineteenth century liberals. The English parliamentary system as conceived by Bentham has broken down. It is not adapted to the sort of economic society which we have evolved. Because the sole basis of representation has been territory, the mechanisms of government have not been related to the occupation of the average man. Local government is slovenly; inertia has seized the civil service because political over-centralization has extinguished creative effort. The solution is to adapt the political organization to the present federalism of the economic system. The Whitely report recognized the federal nature of modern industry and distributes power in accordance with it. The political federalism to conform to the economic order will, therefore, be one of function as well as neighborhood. The individual will is too complex; the voter has too many group interests determining his vote, to enable a single centralized administrative structure to represent him adequately. The state must recognize these complex interests and organize itself accordingly. This will mean a different sort of a state, but it will be one which will relate itself truly to the life of the people. It will therefore be a vastly more vital thing than the present state. It will release creative effort rather than stifle it.

The above has become rather familiar doctrine. It is vague and unsatisfying at many points, but it is none the less significant and thought provoking. Its strength lies in the rejection of the "thus sayeth the law" attitude of mind and its realization that the governmental structure must adapt itself to the job in hand. The state has no divine authority. Its authority is wholly derived from the success with which it does what it sets out to do. Mr. Laski demonstrates that the "cure" in politics involves more than a budget system or a non-partisan ballot. It is a new kind of home rule. H. W. D.

FINANCIAL SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA. By F. F. Blachly. *University of Oklahoma*, 1921. Pp. 66.

This pamphlet has just been issued by the Bureau of Municipal Research of the University of Oklahoma as Number 3 in its *Studies in Government and Administration*. This study cannot be better characterized, perhaps, than by quoting from the preface:

It has been the writer's object to present a picture of the state's finances, complete enough to be of service to public officials, yet simple enough to be understood by the average reader.

It is now generally realized that government is largely a business enterprise, and that modern and efficient business methods are essential to its proper functioning. The growing interest in state budgets is an important and significant indication of this point of view. Since the people of Oklahoma have already adopted the budget system, it is evident that they appreciate the need of putting the state's activities upon a business basis. This study has been prepared because of the conviction that a clear understanding of the state's taxation and revenue system, its funds, assets and liabilities, its budget system and its accounting and reporting system are absolutely essential to this end.

The subject matter has been treated under the following heads: (1) State, Wealth and Expenditure; (2) Taxation and the Revenue System; (3) The Funded Debt; (4) The Appropriation and Budget System; (5) State Funds; (6) The Accounting and Reporting System.

The legislators and citizens of Oklahoma especially are indebted to Dr. Blachly for a presentation of their financial system which is understandable and still not so detailed as to be burdensome. The rest of us are indebted, also, both for the information about Oklahoma and also for an example of what can be done to enlighten legislators and the citizens of other states.

ROY G. BLAKEY.



HOUSING AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH. By John Robertson. New York, Funk and Wagnalls Company. [1920.] Pp. 159, with 12 diagrams.

This volume in the English Public Health Series, written for English readers, well deserves an American edition, because of its simple and convincing style and broad outlook on the prob-