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State Government, by Frank G. Bates and Oliver P. Fields

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STATE GOVERNMENT*

For a generation the members of the faculty of Indiana University in the field of Political Science and Government have been known well and favorably by both students and teachers of government throughout the college world. Professors Woodburn and Hershey have had no superiors and few peers in the fields in which they have chosen to write. It is of great interest and satisfaction to the old grads to find the younger men in the department maintaining the high standards set by their senior colleagues.

Professors Bates and Field have written a textbook on state government which maintains the high standard of excellence which we have learned to expect from the faculty of our Alma Mater.

The selection and arrangement of material is based upon the practical class room experience of the authors. They have made no "radical departures from the traditional methods of presentation."

They have not stressed political theory, although they have included it, nor have they stressed the "problems" of state government, although they have recognized that problems exist. The need of reform at times is recognized, but the authors never assume the role of reformers. They claim in the preface that "stress has been laid upon functions and services rather than upon powers and prohibitions." In other words the actual working of state government is depicted rather than the more technical, legal side. It is the impression of the reviewer, however, that the major portion of the text is devoted to the description, somewhat detailed and carefully exact, of the "structure and operation of the actual machinery of state government." It is more completely a descriptive "handbook" of the organization and machinery of state government than is any other text on state government. It resembles J. J. Clarke's *The Local Government of the United Kingdom*, rather than A. N. Holcombe's *State Government in the United States*.

The above characterization of the book, however, does not apply to the first five chapters which are more general and philosophical in their nature. The first chapter deals with the fundamental concept of political science, such as the purpose and

* By Frank G. Bates and Oliver P. Field. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928. PP. XI, 584.

scope of government, the definitions of the concepts, state sovereignty, nation, and government. Necessarily the authors' presentation is extremely condensed, but nevertheless worth while, in the hands of competent instructors, for students who have been unfortunate enough to take up the study of state government without having had a preliminary course in Political Science such as is covered by such a text as *Garner's Political Science and Government*.

The other general chapters cover the subjects of the relations between the central government and the states, and between the states themselves, the nature and contents of state constitutions, and the direct activities of the electorate in political party activities and elections.

The chapter on state constitution is worthy of special notice. The authors were highly successful in their critical and constructive analysis of the present day constitution in which "the musical sound of phrases often serve to take the place of political thought" in the bill of rights, and in which too often the long and rigid constitution takes the place of the short and flexible constitution dealing "only with the fundamentals of government and its functions."

The remaining eleven chapters of the text comprise what the reviewer characterized above as a "descriptive handbook" on the organization and machinery of state and local government. Such material is most useful in the hands of an instructor able to supplement it with vital problems facing the actual government in separate states.

The selection of descriptive materials which are typical rather than limited to one or a few states is a hazardous and difficult task. The authors are to be complimented upon their scholarly performance of the task.

The reviewer would have been pleased to find a more complete and constructive treatment given to the subjects of corrupt practices legislation, and public utilities administration, but he realizes that space and balance do not permit the inclusion of all our pet hobbies.

The text is fairly free from typographical errors and misstatements of fact. However, the omission of a negative on page 443 spoils the sense of the paragraph. The sentence "since the county (in New England) is an important area of local administration," was evidently intended to read "an *unimportant* area." On page 444 it should be noted that in Maine also the ultimate authority for levying taxes rests with the legislature.

An interesting comparison of the state constitutions of the early period, the middle period, and the recent period, is made possible by printing in the appendix the constitutions of Vermont, 1771, Indiana, 1851, and Arizona, 1910.

The authors have given the members of the profession and the college classes an excellent working manual on state government, and not just another text.

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