

## Problems of Public Finance

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Problems of Public Finance.** By JENS P. JENSEN. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1942. pp. 589.

This is a voluminous work on a subject which has been very much neglected by writers in political science and allied fields—a subject very important to the public. It is difficult to understand why political writers have shied from such topics so persistently. The book itself, written by a comparatively unknown writer, is an ambitious attempt to cover the entire field. It is probably, in spite of all its shortcomings, the best work on the subject that has yet been written—the best, certainly, in the sense that it attempts to and does go quite deeply into the various topics presented. It is, however, lacking in clearness of purpose and in definite outline all because it attempts to satisfy too many different classes of readers. The volume is designed for the public officer, for the professor, for the citizen interested in public matters and for the college student as well. Each class of readers requires a different mode of presentation without demanding of him too much critical readjustment of the subject matter to suit his needs. The philosophical side of the work is almost adequate to the subject. With careful revision and selection it might become one of the most used and useful books in this department. The theories advanced and those restated in the various chapters would, with a little attempt to reconcile the various topics, harmonize themselves into quite an acceptable theory of public finance. This is saying a great deal for the work, but it merits it.

From the student point of view and that of the beginner in public finance, the work is lacking in concrete examples and footnotes to bear out the statements made in the text. It is also almost entirely lacking in the mechanical cross reference apparatus and also in its failure to connect the bibliography systematically with the text of the various chapters, although there is a partial list of books at the end of each chapter. There is very little of the author displayed in the work, which leaves the treatment of the subject in a sort of formless, backboneless condition. If Jens Jensen will lean a little harder on his subject matter and re-write this treatise in simpler and more conclusive form he has a brilliant prospect of producing the best work on public finance that has yet been published.

Carl C. Plehn's earlier work is a model of simplicity and outline. It has held the field for over twenty-five years. There is definite need of a systematic, clear-cut, natural history of public finance fortified in footnote or appendix with good concrete examples of the things talked about, and of the theories utilized. The above work is a fine start toward the desired end.

CHAS. W. BARCOCK.

**The Constitution and the Courts.** By WILLIAM M. MEIGS and THOMAS H. CALVERT. Northport: Edward Thompson Co. 1924. Vol. I, pp. vi, 1169; Vol. II, pp. iv, 1114; Vol. III, pp. 478.

This work contains the full text of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Northwest Ordinance and the Constitution of the United States and its amendments. Following this, the reader finds the well-known, analytical index of the Constitution and its amendments covering thirty-two closely printed pages which was prepared for and printed in the *Revised Statutes*