Cases on Public Utilities

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BOOK REVIEWS

Cases on Public Utilities. Am. Casebook Series; Smith Dowling, Professor of Law, Columbia University.

This book is a compilation of leading American cases and a few English cases in the laws governing public utilities. The public utility laws are still in their infancy and this book fills a much needed breach in the intelligent legal understanding of this vital business.

The tendency of public utilities today is for monopolistic control, and, being of a quasi-public nature, the recent decisions of our courts have tended to uphold such control as against competitive organizations over large territories. This phase of the law is given an important place in the text.

The cases selected cover every important legal angle of the industry, its organization, supervision, liability and rate making. The cases represent the decisions of the courts of the entire United States and are not selected from any one particular section, as so many case books are wont to do.

The most important phase of public utilities not only to the company, but to the public, is the matter of rates. This, because of its extreme importance, is in the most confusion. The authors have attempted, and with success, to make a most thorough study of this particular field and almost one third of the book is devoted to it.

The footnotes are especially well organized and the states which have dealt with each case given are cited therein.

The authors have incorporated into the text a feature which is especially worthy of note. They have placed, wherever possible, on those phases of the law which are unsettled, leading articles, for the purpose of stimulating intelligent discussion, and arriving at conclusions not possible from the cases, because of the scarcity of decisions on those subjects.

In the appendix is a copy of the Interstate Commerce Act and the Elkins Act, which is absolutely essential in the study of public utilities.

E.D.G.


As the development of the casebook system has been gradual, so the growth of equity and books on equity has been slow. At last, however, an equitable compilation has been completed that seems to solve the casebook difficulties in the field of equity. The entire field of the law of chancery is embraced within one volume by the persistent author, W. W. Cook.

Cleverness and succinctness characterize the volume. The arrangement is skilfully established. The book begins with a historical treatise on equity that begins with the first days of chancery back in A.D. 1290 under Edward I, and paints the growth of equitable doctrine to our day. After this brief history the various branches of equity are considered especially. A tree of equity finally blossoms and we comprehend that there is a real field of equity. It is all artistically arranged in this one volume. This concentrated co-ordination of equity is the work's most favorable feature.