



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Social Pathology in China*. by Herbert Day Lamson

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periods (despite the operation of the profit motive), and yet he concludes that the incentive to profit will lead to public utility extensions during low-cost periods. This neglect of obvious considerations—that plant investment is more responsive to demand than cost, that demand for public utility services is conditioned more nearly on general business conditions than price, that even were his point true the advantages would be capitalized against the consumer—is rooted in a characteristic fallacy, the assumption that the reproduction-cost method will be applied literally no matter what happens to price. No careful student of commission regulation, aware of the constant necessity, if consumer interest in amount and quality of service (more important than price) are to be served, to protect the credit position of growing utilities, could be guilty of such an error. Reproduction-cost is a “fair weather” method for the regulated companies. They know that during periods of falling prices, their earning power, either through the rate-base or the rate of return, will not be reduced *by regulation* below an amount justified by prudent investment.

Even to list the dubious shibboleths by which the author attempts to build the case for reproduction-cost would require an essay of a length not justified by the importance of the subject. The time has arrived when the subject of utility regulation should be approached with arguments more substantial than empty phrases. Professor Graham's book is too characteristic of the product of the specialist who strays from the field in which his word is authoritative.

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Social Pathology in China, by Herbert Day Lamson. Shanghai: The Commercial Press, Ltd. 1934. 607 pp.

The strength of many social movements is centered in a timely book. Even a humble textbook may exert a strong influence on thousands of students and thereby foster a science or develop a profession. This text on the problems of Chinese livelihood, health and family life may stimulate greatly the growth of social statistics, economic surveys, and social service in China. The author has drawn together the rather meager data available on Chinese conditions, using them to adapt the usual American discussion of social problems to the outlook of his students at the University of Shanghai. Although he has been compelled to draw most of his statistics from American sources, he presents a great deal of descriptive material on conditions in China for which no statistics are available. The book is well written and appears to emphasize problems according to their importance in China rather than in America. The author's attitude throughout is remarkably even-tempered and objective. Raw propaganda is excluded yet the book does present an impressive case for social reform and inferentially the great need and opportunity for social and economic research.

The text starts with poverty and pauperism and proceeds to a discussion of standards of living, wages, and income. Here, as elsewhere throughout the book, the author summarizes small studies which have been made in China and presents statistics on similar subjects in the United States. A number of his own

studies are included but in proper proportion and with admirable restraint. Rural and urban problems, housing, illiteracy, and population pressure are also considered.

The section on health begins with a general chapter on sickness, which is followed by chapters on leprosy, tuberculosis, venereal disease, mental deficiency, and mental disease. It closes with a discussion of public health. The third section presents problems of marriage and the family, divorce, desertion, infanticide, child slavery, widowhood, contraception, and education for marriage. The author wisely limits his book to these three sections omitting any detailed treatment of crime, unemployment, recreation, and many other problems. The interconnections between various social, health, and economic conditions are evident throughout the book.

In many instances, quotations are presented uncritically or the author lapses into broad generalizations unsupported by data. In this respect he does not differ from authors of American textbooks. Proverbs are quoted freely and doubtless with good pedagogical results. Excellent bibliographies are presented.

The principal parts of interest to American readers will doubtless be the fragmentary survey data presented and the more distinctly Chinese phases of the problems of extreme poverty, primitive sanitary facilities, and an uneducated population. The problems of family relationships, including those peculiar to the large family and to certain Chinese marriage customs, are interesting additions to the usual American subject matter. One is intrigued by the book to speculate on two questions, "How would a native Chinese sociologist have written it?" and "What future studies of the cost of living, wages, population, housing, public health, and family life will spring from the study of this book?"

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Compensation in the Professions, by Lester W. Bartlett with the assistance of Mildred B. Neel. New York: Association Press. 1933. xv, 187 pp.

How to determine what are fair and efficient rates of compensation for particular occupations at particular times and places is a troublesome problem of much social importance. It is one with which many philanthropic and other non-profit making organizations are continually harassed. This study, made primarily for the guidance of Y. M. C. A.'s, has attempted to identify the most important principles which should be taken into consideration in determining the salaries of workers of professional grade. A list of sixteen general principles which should influence decisions concerning compensation policies is arrived at, which are of interest and which should be of value for general evaluation of salary practices and policies. For the most part they rest on *a priori* assumptions and cannot be said to be demonstrated by the evidence presented in the study. In general, the evidence offered in support of the argument is illustrative rather than conclusive, and much of the statistical data is definitely faulty.

A primary criticism of the statistics of the study is that data which are at best