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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

COMMERCIAL TEACHING PROBLEMS, by PAUL S. LOMAX. *Prentice-Hall, Inc.*, New York. 200 pages.

The author of *Commercial Teaching Problems* covers in an interesting way the fundamental principles involved in the teaching of the young men and women who will handle the financial and commercial enterprises in the future. If teachers would take advantage of many of the suggestions contained in this book, they undoubtedly would benefit materially in their work and would render increased service to the business world in general.

The author, among other things, sets forth the major objectives of education as follows: Activities that promote health; build worthy home-membership; advance civic life (citizenship), and develop ethical character.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the foregoing objectives in detail, but the fact that some of them are often ignored is a serious defect in the methods of many commercial schools, particularly evening schools. The average instructor is primarily concerned with the student's completion of the outlined course of study in order that he may be equipped with the proper knowledge to go forth and make a living.

Unquestionably it is of importance that the student be able to use to financial advantage the learning he has acquired as otherwise he might not take the trouble to go to school. On the other hand it is highly important that the student keep his health as it not only makes it possible for him to do his best work but makes it possible for him to be cheerful and agreeable, which has its effect on his fellow workers.

There is a tendency in young people to overlook the importance of the home in the social structure. Therefore, it appears to me that the author is justified in mentioning activities that build worthy home-membership as a part of school instruction.

There is also a tendency among many people to shift responsibility for activities that advance civic life. In my opinion every teacher or instructor should attempt to instill in the minds of his students their responsibility for civic duties.

There is a tendency among the business enterprises of the country to supplant the old-fashioned method of competition with a friendly and helpful form of competition. This situation is evidenced by the organization of many business associations. Instructors should impress upon the minds of their students the importance of ethical conduct in conjunction with their work.

The author stresses the importance of occupational analysis, which every instructor would do well to apply to his teaching. I believe that it is the duty of the instructor to make some study of each student, and if he finds that he has students in his class that are not fitted for the type of work they are studying it is his moral duty to suggest, either to the students or to the dean of his school that an effort be made to have such students transferred to a field for which they are better adapted.

Among his important principles of learning, the author mentions that a student should strive to learn a subject in a large way rather than in a small

way. By this he means that a student should get a general idea of a subject and then supplement it by what he calls the "precise" method of practice.

The author stresses the importance of bringing to the minds of the students practical situations so far as possible. This view appears to be gaining in the commercial schools, as many of them are including in their instruction, to supplement theory, practical problems and illustrative cases.

This book is recommended to teachers in commercial and professional schools.

WAYNE KENDRICK.

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ACCOUNTING IN OLIVE GREEN, by T. J. MORAN, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Under the singular title, *Accounting in Olive Green*, Mr. Moran offers a booklet, bound in olive-green paper, which is somewhat difficult to classify. It appears to be a mixture of teaching elementary bookkeeping by rote and of an attempt to set up a system which eliminates what the author considers superfluous books and methods of accounting.

It is a loose-leaf ledger which is to take the place of the standard cashbook, journal and ledgers, general and subsidiary. It is to be the book of original entry, and each transaction is to be entered in ledger accounts seriatim, debit and credit; i.e. there are no controlling accounts. In each account a column is provided in which the bookkeeper must write the name of the contra account to which the item is to be "posted," thus doing away with journals and subsidiary ledgers. At the left of each page is printed a chart of the main capital and operating accounts for the bookkeeper's guidance. The text opposite each page of the ledger tells briefly what is to be debited and credited in that particular account. All this suggests that the booklet is intended primarily to teach elementary bookkeeping by mechanical rote—almost diagrammatic, in fact. Probably any tyro of average intelligence would soon learn under the system how to make correct entries. Most of us of the older generation of accountants no doubt learned that way, though not beginning with the ledger as a rule. The obvious defect in this method is that the student so trained would be puzzled to know what to do if a change of employment brought him in touch with a standard set of books. Nevertheless it is not a bad way to start.

The same can not be honestly said of all the author's definitions and dogmatic assertions elsewhere. To say that the journal "is the most useless book ever introduced into accounting procedure, as it controls nothing" is a pretty wild statement; and the definitions of a trial balance and a balance-sheet are so at variance with universally accepted practice as to be both absurd and dangerous. Here they are:

"A trial balance is the grand total of the gross debit and the gross credit of all of each account."

"A balance-sheet is the grand total of the net debit and net credit of all of each account; however, this is almost universally erroneously referred to as a trial balance."

Now a man has a perfect right to set up and defend any theory he has a mind to, but a writer of a textbook or guide for beginners is not justified in subjecting them to the danger of being considered ignoramuses when they enter a business office or try a C. P. A. examination.

## *Book Reviews*

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Mr. Moran's three-column balance-sheet as a substitute for the customary eight-column working sheet is ingenious, and no doubt a time-saver if no errors have been made by the bookkeeper. As such a happy state of affairs is rare, I think the majority of us will prefer to continue the present method of preserving a record of all adjustments.

W. H. LAWTON.

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120 GRADUATED EXERCISES IN BOOKKEEPING, by ROBERT R. THOMPSON. *Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons (Canada) Limited*, Toronto. 276 pages.

The outstanding impression left by a perusal of *120 Graduated Exercises in Bookkeeping* is that Mr. Thompson, a chartered accountant and a professor at M'Gill University, possesses that rare combination of qualities—practical accounting ability and skill in imparting his knowledge to others.

The title leads us to expect exercises in bookkeeping. This is exactly what is found. We are also told to expect graduated exercises but we have to go inside the cover to find how skilfully the exercises are graduated and how carefully they are designed with the object of affording practice to the student and, at the same time, encouraging him to think things out for himself along practical rather than theoretical lines.

The exercises are divided into groups, each group introducing some special feature not previously considered. The objection might be raised that too many exercises have been devoted to certain features, but the author has pointed out quite definitely in his foreword that, although an instructor could use the book alone for a course in bookkeeping, it is intended primarily for use with a textbook and that, when so used, the sequence and number of exercises used can be modified to suit the prevailing requirements.

Each group is preceded by a page stating the special features involved, the books required and instructions. The special features are also listed by groups in a table of exercises. Reference is also facilitated by an index showing in what exercises specific points receive attention.

In addition to the indexes and the foreword already mentioned, the book contains sections setting forth briefly the principles and definitions involved, general notes for guidance and suggested rulings for the books which it will be found necessary to use. The book should be of value to instructors.

HAROLD R. CAFFYN.