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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph W. Harney [Ed.]

TRAFFIC COURTS, by *George Warren*. Little Brown and Company. (Boston, Massachusetts, 1942.) Pp. 245, appendix. \$4.00.

This work is one of the Judicial Administration series, published under the auspices of the National Conference of Judicial Councils, the purpose of which is to promote a better, more efficient judicial system.

In compiling material for this publication, the author, who until recently was special counsel for the National Committee on Traffic Law Enforcement, made a nation-wide survey of traffic courts and their personnel. The survey consisted of personal contact work with traffic court judges and court officials in forty-eight states and the utilization of answers to questionnaires sent to more than 13,000 persons, including judges, attorney generals, justices of the peace and others. Here, in less than two hundred and fifty pages, is a startling as well as a complete and comprehensive exposure of our traffic court system as it exists today.

It is quite apparent that traffic laws and traffic court judges have not kept pace with the evolution of the automobile. The automobile is charged with the slaughtering of more persons than any war; it is responsible for the destruction of one and one-half-billion dollars worth of property each year and it has brought one out of every eight persons before a judge in a court of law. Yet the author cites numerous cases, complete with verification, which make one blush with shame at some of the out-dated laws and senseless conditions existing in the traffic courts of the land.

Separate chapters are allotted to traffic court aims and purposes, procedure, administration, personnel, and the physical conditions of court rooms. The story of violations bureaus, the function of the prosecutor, the "fix," and the fee system are also ably handled and most complete.

An excellent chapter on "Punishing the Traffic Violator" contains a splendid analysis of this troublesome problem with special consideration given to the subject of first offenders and juvenile violators.

In this same chapter the failure of traffic courts to attain the desired efficiency is laid, in part, to a lack of any similarity in thought or theory on the part of traffic court judges. This absence of effective coordination between the judges who try traffic offenders leads to fines varying in amount according to the mood of the particular judge; the community's awareness of the inequalities in punishment—breeding non-compliance and disrespect for law, and finally, the failure to impose punishments designed to deter the defendants from the same or other traffic offenses.

The wasted opportunities to train and educate so many of the public in good citizenship and traffic safety, caused by the transformation of traffic courts into "fining mills" rather than scientific traffic law enforcement agencies, are also emphasized in this chapter.

Under the title "Traffic Court Personnel," the author impresses upon the reader the fact that the number of people that march in and out of our traffic courts each year can be counted in the millions. Due to the nature of the cases tried and the small amounts involved, these courts represent both the court of first and last resort to the average person. From this court justice is received, and on this experience is based the concept of our entire judicial structure. Hence the extreme importance of these courts and

the reason why we should cease neglecting them and pay more attention to them.

The reviewer is in accord with the statement that the perfect traffic judge should possess a knowledge of traffic laws, traffic policing and traffic engineering in addition to a satisfactory legal background. But, most of all, he should be so enthused with traffic court work that the desire to make this world a safer place to live in, more than compensates him for the greater number of cases he hears, the longer hours he spends on the bench and the monotony of the subject matter.

Traffic Courts has the authority of a law brief, with every statement and conclusion backed up by references to actual facts, yet it reads like a story book. All of which impresses the reader with the great amount of thought and research that has gone into this volume.

Traffic Courts should be very interesting to all members of the judiciary and members of the bar, to all law enforcement officers and food for thought for every civic-minded citizen. It is hoped that the interest aroused by this publication will speed the advancement of the traffic court to its proper position in our judicial system.

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MUNICIPAL POLICE ADMINISTRATION. Edited by O. W. Wilson and Theo Hall. Published by The International City Managers' Association (Chicago, Ill., 1943, Pp. 531, \$7.50.

This is one of the most important volumes ever published in the field of police science. While it is true education and all that can be learned from books alone does not make a good police officer, a book such as this is a definite help to even the most "practical" minded of police officers. This reviewer is already on record as stating that the first edition was the most enlightening opus ever published on police work. This second edition has much added material. The readers will find here the best accepted administrative methods and how to apply them to police problems. This is a book for all progressive police officers of all ranks and degrees of experience. This second edition covers many new police problems, such as, wartime work of police, relationships with private police, new procedures in recruitment, factors to consider in distribution of patrol force and other wartime problems. The book is divided into thirteen chapters as follows: (1) The Municipal Police Problem; (2) Police Organization; (3) Personnel Management; (4) Training; (5) Crime Prevention; (6) Patrol Division; (7) Criminal Investigation; (8) Traffic Control; (9) Communications; (10) Records; (11) Property and Equipment; (12) Other Police Problems; and (13) The Police and the Public.

Professor O. W. Wilson and Chief Theo Hall of the Wilmette, Illinois, Police Department have done a masterful job. *Municipal Police Administration* is a volume for the heads of police departments who are anxious to gain the support of the public, and a volume for every police officer who has the desire to keep up to date with the latest and best in police methods. No police officer can afford not to read with care *Municipal Police Administration* if he is interested in sound police administration.

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JOHN I. HOWE