

BOOK REVIEWS

Real Estate Law. By Robert Kratovil. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. Pp. xxiii, 349. \$4.50.

Primarily written to help businessmen and brokers understand real estate law, Robert Kratovil's book has much to recommend it to lawyers. Through a careful selection of material, the more important legal rules governing real estate law are set forth in an extremely short and compact work. General rules of law, stated in terms understandable to one unfamiliar with legal terminology, are followed by concise illustrations.

Any book on real estate law, written for both layman and lawyer, must be in part unsatisfactory. The use of terms understandable to the businessman leads to unnecessary circumlocution. A premium is placed on simplicity at the expense of precision. Numerous definitions of words common to lawyers prevent the work from being as compact as otherwise would be possible. These definitions, however, may be scanned by the lawyer, and if read carefully by the nonlawyer should prove highly valuable to an understanding of real estate law.

The author has covered the more important practical aspects of real estate law which are common to most general textbooks on the subject. In addition, he has included chapters on "Loan Insurance under the National Housing Act" and "Rent Control," which are sufficient to give the layman a basic understanding of some of the problems to be encountered. Certain portions of this work, however, are of little value to either the initiate or uninitiate. While the layman may feel that the opening chapter on the "Sources of Real Estate Law" is longer than necessary, the lawyer undoubtedly will feel that its treatment in two pages leaves something to be desired. There is more than one chapter of this nature which will not materially enrich the lawyer's knowledge. They are, however, few in number. For most practicing lawyers this book will afford a very readable review of the law which they once learned and have possibly forgotten.

Kratovil has avoided the theoretical aspects of real estate law and has stressed its practical application to the buying and selling of property. A lawyer or real estate broker closing his first sale will find the chapter on the "Consummation of a Real Estate Sale" of inestimable value. The convenient listing of items to be attended to is a valued reminder lest some detail be overlooked, only to arise at a later date to delay or annoy. Expenses to be prorated on closing, such as coal, insurance, janitor and scavenger services are of such a mundane character that most lawyers have emerged from their legal education with their minds unsullied. An insufficient understanding of these necessary actions may often prove of more immediate embarrassment to a lawyer than will an inability to remember the rule in Shelley's case.

Kratovil has tried to cover the more important legal rules of real estate in all states. This is unfortunate and is one of the primary disadvantages of the work. If a businessman or broker is able to master the general legal principles of his own state, he should probably be well satisfied. It is a mistake to attempt to cover, even cursorily, the law of

more than one state in a work of this size. Certainly a discussion of the Maryland and Pennsylvania ground rent systems is of little interest to the normal businessman.

As a direct result of the attempt to cover all states in this work, the lawyer will find that it is not a valuable aid in finding the case law. This will be particularly true for the practitioner in a state other than Illinois, as the great majority of the citations are to Illinois cases. Even the Illinois lawyer will be often discouraged when a point in question is discussed and the citation following is to a California, Texas, or Kansas decision.

The material in this book has been well organized and clearly presented. A complete table of contents and a thorough job of indexing make it a valuable reference book. The obviously painstaking work which has gone to make a complex subject more understandable to business men has been well spent.

EDWARD W. SAUNDERS*

The International Secretariat; A Great Experiment in International Administration.

By Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945. Pp. 500. \$4.50.

The United Nations can succeed only if it is able to attract the loyalty of the peoples of the world. National patriotism in every country must give way to United Nations patriotism if the international organization can be expected to act effectively when the peace of the world is endangered.

It is the Secretariat of the United Nations and those of the "specialized agencies" which are best fitted to build this all essential feeling in the hearts of men. The Assembly and the Security Council are composed of national members. The secretariats alone of the divisions of the United Nations will take a purely world view. Their secretaries general and their international staffs will be the symbols of world unity. The secretariats will furnish services not only to nations but to individuals. Through these services the United Nations can reach the peoples of the world and gradually weave the emotional ties which are necessary for a world opinion.

It is thus of first importance to the future of the world that the secretariats function with the highest possible degree of efficiency. How can they best carry out their tasks? One guidepost of first importance will be past experience in international administration. Dr. Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer has done the whole world a distinct service in writing the first book devoted exclusively to the administration of the League of Nations Secretariat, the world's first major experiment in this field. *The International Secretariat*, moreover, appeared in time to be at the disposal of those who laid the foundation of the United Nations Secretariat at the San Francisco and London conferences. The book is meant to be of practical value, for the author besides being a first-rate scholar is a former international civil servant. Dr. Ranshofen-Wertheimer has written with a high degree of objectivity (a quality, incidentally, of prime importance in an international administrator).

The inclusion of Russia and the United States at the start of the new world organization has perhaps obscured its similarity with the League. The Preparatory Commission, which drew up plans for the establishment of the Secretariat, drew heavily on League experience and indeed on the testimony of former League officials. *The International Secretariat* brings out clearly the League Secretariat's greatest administrative

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