

ministry and a body of permanent officers known as the civil service, presents a decline from the old national folk-mote." The English system is condemned because power rests altogether with the elected council, made up of amateurs; because, therefore, responsibility, the title to praise or blame, rests, not with the permanent servants, but with the council; and because, with changes in the personnel of that body, "it is difficult to carry out, on any question whatever, large policies needing foresight and steady, continuous action, uninfluenced by the wavering favor of a fickle electorate." Already this government by amateurs, unable to cope with the unlimited needs and rapidly-expanding enterprises of the modern municipality, is showing unmistakable signs of distress. One of two courses may be taken. Either the council may surrender to the experts a larger and larger discretion while necessarily retaining responsibility for their acts; or the whole system may be recast along German lines with an independent administrative body subordinated to the council only in matters of finance. Municipal workers who have studied the German arrangements, Mr. Dawson says, are coming to believe that force of circumstances will compel the adoption of the latter course. He admits that to Englishmen, who prefer the worst amateur to the best expert, this will sound like strange doctrine. Perhaps there are others, outside England, who think that, through its representatives, "the fickle electorate" should still have something to say in the framing of policies.

E. M. SAIT.

*Carrying Out the City Plan.* By FLAVEL SHURTLEFF. New York, Survey Associates, Inc., 1914.—ix, 349 pp.

During the last decade or so a vast change has come about in the popular notion of what city-planning means and what it is for. As a harmless diversion it no longer exists. It has long since ceased to be an expensive and unproductive luxury interpreted solely in terms of shade trees and parkway vistas; it has come to stand in the minds of municipal statesmen for the complex problems of congestion, unearned increment, rapid transit, rent and taxation. Its challenge is social, economic and legal as well as esthetic. In fact one of the most serious problems to be faced in any thoroughgoing town-planning project is that of legal authority to act. How much power has the state legislature granted to the city? How much power does the state constitution permit the legislature to grant? How much power does the Federal Constitution allow the state legislature to grant? It is in answering

these questions that Mr. Shurtleff's volume is a timely and informing study.

The various methods of carrying out the city plan are treated in their legal aspects. The author turns first to the public ownership of land. American cities, in striking contrast to those of Germany, may acquire land only for a specific public purpose and may use the land thus acquired only in the way specified. While such a restriction works for stability in the execution of the plan it also deprives the city of the great economies which might result from using for building sites land acquired and no longer needed for other definite public purposes. It also prevents the city from buying cheaply land which it will need for public use in the more or less distant future. There follows a rather dismal recital of our cumbersome, expensive, and not very efficient types of procedure in the condemnation of land. The author urges that the possession of land condemned by the city should not be obliged to wait till disputes over the amount of money damages are adjusted to the satisfaction of all the litigants. After discussing various types of tribunals used in settling damage and compensation disputes he concludes that whatever tribunal may be best it should be non-partisan, permanent and well paid. A chapter on "The Distribution of the Cost of Land Acquirement" deals with the financial problems of city-planning created by the almost universal limitations on the power of American municipalities to tax and to borrow money. Besides the radical proposal that limits on city indebtedness be removed, there are two methods of achieving the same result which have been devised by American ingenuity. One is the combining of city and county debt limits so as to double the borrowing power of the common geographical area, while the other is the purchase of land by the city on the installment plan. The general and serviceable "made-in-America" method of paying for public improvements is of course by special assessments; and a careful treatment is given of the history and technical problems of this system.

No discussion of practical town-planning nowadays is complete without some mention of excess condemnation, that ingenious scheme by which the city aims to pay for its public improvements out of its unearned increment by condemning more land than it needs and selling the surplus at the increased value caused by the improvement itself. Mr. Shurtleff surveys briefly the meagre experience which American cities have had with this policy and gives us a valuable though not exhaustive summary of the American statutes and decisions relating to excess condemnation. He finds that no serious attempt to employ

this method of carrying out the city plan is possible without an amendment to the state constitution, and that even such an amendment may be attacked under the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. An analysis of the rather unfortunate experience of cities in France and Belgium and of London with excess condemnation as a financial expedient leads the author to the conclusion that it would be unwise for American cities to rely on it as a means of recouping the cost of extensive city-planning projects. In its less drastic forms, however, it may well be employed to protect the beauty of public improvements. A less radical substitute for excess condemnation may be found in a scheme of special assessments coupled with condemnation of easements.

In his discussion of the police power in carrying out the city plan Mr. Shurtleff draws attention to the recent progress made in the way of limitations on the height of buildings and the creation of districts in which certain uses of property are forbidden. The summary presented of the offensive uses of land which are not subject to governmental interference through the police power indicates how meagre are the results which may be hoped for from such a method. Little can be done in this way until public sentiment has been educated to the point of demanding that the public eye as well as the public nose and ear be protected from nuisance.

In a closing chapter the organization and work of planning commissions is dealt with. Under existing American law and policy the work of these bodies must continue for some time to come to be largely advisory and educational. Such educational work is, however, of immediate and vast importance, since real progress in the direction of wise and progressive city-planning can hardly move far in advance of the public will.

Mr. Shurtleff has narrowly limited the scope of his study. Exposition of European methods of dealing with city-planning problems is confined in the main to the financial results of excess condemnation. While a description of the practice of foreign cities would be irrelevant to the discussion of many of the problems of which the author treats, it is to be regretted that he did not give us at least a hasty sketch of the way in which the cities of Europe are dealing with the administrative problems of the city plan. It is upon this phase of the work that we hang most of our doubts as to the efficiency of American city-planning and it is here, therefore, that we would most welcome the lessons of foreign method and experience. There are a few seeming limitations of Mr. Shurtleff's book which are inevitable in view of the subject he is

treating. That, as a statement of the law, it was in part out of date almost before it was printed is not a reflection upon the enterprise of the author, but a commentary upon the rapidity with which the city-planning movement is attaining legal recognition in the United States. If one is inclined at times to protest that the author has generalized upon one particular in his discussion of American city-planning practice, it is well to remember that in all probability there was but one particular upon which to generalize. If the pages are not laden with citations and the other ear-marks of erudition it is because the book is a pioneer in a hitherto unoccupied field.

Mr. Shurtleff has given us a satisfactory statement of the law with which those who would carry out a plan for the American city must reckon. He has earned the gratitude of all those who are seriously enough interested in city-planning to realize that it is a very practical problem, by throwing light upon what is, for the American city, the most immediate practical aspect of it.

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*The Life of Thomas Brackett Reed.* By SAMUEL W. MCCALL.  
Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914—xiii, 303 pp.

No one can contemplate the career of Thomas B. Reed without realizing how fortuitous are the currents of politics and how indifferent is time to fame. Many men who knew Reed, saw him in action, and understood the sincerity of his devotion to principle, long thought that he was marked out for the presidency of the United States. A clever journalist of Reed's time remarked that only his sense of humor and his acquaintance with French literature prevented his election to that high office. And yet the Czar of the House of Representatives has almost passed from the thoughts of all except those of his own generation.

Everyone who still has a place for Reed in his memory will be grateful for this biography and count himself fortunate that the task of writing it has been committed to Mr. McCall. It is a straightforward narrative of Reed's life from childhood to the end. The design of the book and the style are simple. There are light touches of humor which enliven the pages, and there is an occasional political excursus which adds to the interest of the story, but Reed's doings and sayings occupy nearly all of the volume. Obviously the author of the book finds fragrance in the memory of the man whose record he has set down, but no undue sympathy or partisan sourness mars any of the pages. Even