

Security for the Worker

THE UNEMPLOYED WORKER. By E. Wight Bakke. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1940. 457 pp., with index. \$4.

CITIZENS WITHOUT WORK. By the same author. The same. 1940. 306 pp., with index. \$3.

SOCIAL WORK YEAR BOOK, 1941. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 1941. 670 pp., with index. \$3.25.

Reviewed by ABRAHAM EPSTEIN

NEVER before has America been supplied with more profound and more vivid insight into the unemployed worker and the problems he creates for himself and society than that given by Dr. Bakke in the above two volumes. The result of painstaking study of 200 unemployed workers in New Haven in all their adjustments and reactions for eight years during the depth of the depression, Prof. Bakke's volumes are not only Middletowns of the unemployed but provide us with encyclopedic new information on the psychological, economic, sociological, political, and even religious effects of unemployment. Written lucidly and with obvious feeling, the two volumes shed new light not only upon the unemployed but upon every institution of life as well as the various individual and social provisions so far set up for the jobless.

In these days of darkness and gloom, Mr. Bakke's conclusions are most cheering. Thus, his studies convince him that the national and community provisions for the unemployed do not endanger the incentive to work because "men work for more than money." A job "means more than the wages received for the effort" because the values created by a job "cannot be produced by the receipt of an amount of cash equivalent to wages." His investigation completely refutes the assumption that workers "are motivated by essentially the same incentives and trained in the same school of experience . . . as bankers and professors."

Those concerned with American public welfare will be cheered by Mr. Bakke's findings that despite the multitude of experiences the worker finds to the contrary, the basic conviction that a man is responsible for his own economic success or failure is held steadfastly by the mass of unemployed. "With the exception of a few intellectually inclined adherents to leftist doctrines and an occasional student of society among trade unionists, there was no serious challenge to the ultimate soundness of . . . (the) as-

sumption of individual responsibility for self-support even during the depths of the depression."

That "union men were much more inclined to excuse the employer as caught in a situation over which he had no control than were non-union men" may come as a surprise to many hard-boiled employers but is really a natural result of collective bargaining.

As to direct relief, Mr. Bakke found that in New Haven the security provided from this source was "inadequate" even in comparison with the worker's former limited standards. The worst feature of relief is the investigation and the control which outsiders assume in the worker's household planning and family authority.

While Mr. Bakke questions the value of any kind of work over direct relief, he points out that "if purposeful, socially useful, and efficiently managed" work relief provides the unskilled worker with "a basis of social adjustment and status which is sim-

ilar to and in some cases superior to his former jobs for a private employer." But "no artificial or meaningless job can hope to provide any self-respect for the workers" because they cannot take pride in a job which is a mere excuse for giving them money, which condones loafing, or offers the same reward whether they are good or bad workers.

"The Social Work Year Book for 1941" consists of two main parts: (1) The encyclopedic section with topical articles on different phases of social work; and (2) a directory of public and private national and state agencies of social work.

The second part is both excellent and valuable. While this reviewer does not pretend to have read every article in the first part, he has read those articles dealing with the subjects familiar to him. Judging by these, there seems to be one outstanding distinction between this "Year Book," and the "Encyclopaedia Britannica": Whereas the latter always calls upon the best authorities to write on their specialties, the "Year Book" frequently seems to go out of its way to select shoemakers to tailor suits.

Ethereal Business

I LIVE ON AIR. By A. A. Schechter with Edward Anthony. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 1941. 582 pp., with pictures. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CHARLES J. ROLO

"I LIVE On Air" is an informal (very informal) history of a hectic decade of radio journalism.

In the early 1930s radio, as Mr. Schechter so pungently phrases it, was "the prize exhibit in American journalism's doghouse." Lowell Thomas had a million-dollar voice but not a nickel's worth of news. The press associations would not sell to radio, and the newspapers were itching for a chance to sue the short pants off the then infant industry if it "lifted" any

stories from their pages. At this point, Mr. Schechter became active with a battery of telephones, a scissors, and paste-pot. With the telephone he covered the forty-eight states of the Union, and with the scissors and paste he covered the rest of the world simply by clipping items from the foreign press. In this way radio news was put on the map.

The story of radio's development from its "doghouse" to its "lovely" days is told by Mr. Schechter in the form of *petite histoire* or anecdote. You will find them (the anecdotes) all here:—the first broadcast from the Great Pyramid, the performing parrots, the parachute jumper who got microphobia in mid-air, how Lowell Thomas won the Legion of Honor, and how Arthur Krock acknowledged the Pulitzer Prize award from the men's room of the Hotel Edison. Mr. Schechter and his co-author have an agreeable talent for story-telling, and a racy style marked by a fondness for homespun American idiom. They write from the inside with all the data at their disposal. The result is a readable, in parts highly entertaining volume on a subject that so far has not been adequately covered. Anyone interested in news coverage in general or radio in particular might do well to have a copy of "I Live on Air" on his desk.



A. A. ("Abe") Schechter

The Sanderson Sagas

LIVING TREASURE. By Ivan T. Sanderson. New York: The Viking Press. 1941. 290 pp., with index. \$3.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

SANDERSON rides again. The zoölogical explorer whose loving observations on the small wild life of the tropics have already appeared in two books, "Animal Treasure," and "Caribbean Treasure," now offers more of the same treasure in a volume that is practically identical with its predecessors. His attention is still focussed as intently and exclusively as ever on the wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beasties that lurk in the tropical wilderness. Birds cannot distract him, human beings loom in his vision either as they contribute to his researches or obstruct them, and even the large beasts excite no more than a passing awe. A captive vulture is notable only as host to a swarm of parasitic flies, as a sort of bush frequented by wild life. A successful day of hunting, in his view, is one that nets him "five lizards . . . two different frogs, a small scorpion, and one tiny, free-living red mite." What is real and wonderful can be held in the hand.

This is, in a sense, a book of travels, so it must perforce be mentioned that the author and his wife, in the course of their present researches, went from Jamaica to British Honduras to Yucatan. But the locale of whatever plot of jungle, savanna, or pine ridge happens to be under observation is really immaterial. Habitat is what counts to the zoölogical traveler who keeps his eyes on the ground at his feet. In this microcosmic perspective, the immediate "environmental niche" looms larger than the continent on which it occurs, minute ecological relationships count for more than broad geographical distribution. But, so concentrated and vivid is this Sandersonian wonder-world, as it is described in these books, that the reader enters into it immediately and fully, sharing its author's affectionate delight at its minute and often monstrous inhabitants, forgetting that any larger world exists at all. It is hard to believe that a thundering herd of big game could assume more dramatic proportions than, say, the parasol ants whose social activities are chronicled in this volume.

When an author has become established, as Mr. Sanderson now has, it is common to take his virtues for granted and notice faults that, in a new writer of equal caliber, might pass unregarded. The fact is that each of these volumes has been marred, in the presentation, by a sort of personal uneasiness on the author's part, as if



Drawn by the author.

he dreaded that his readers would find him at once too frivolous as a scientist and too solemn as a person. He goes out of his way unnecessarily to justify himself. This fault, which often finds its expression in a sort of boastful diffidence (as in the complacent statement that "we do not take ourselves at all seriously"), becomes irritating and often detracts from the genuineness of a genuine intellectual enthusiasm. He seems to feel that he must be at pains to persuade his readers that, while he works in dead earnest, he has, nevertheless, as healthy a scorn for the "pomposities" of science and exploration as he supposes they must have. So he cuts short his simple and utterly absorbing scientific expositions

with self-conscious apologies and frivolous expressions of contempt that are really not necessary at all. Like a man's sobriety, these things are always better taken for granted.

This is a small reservation, but it is worth mentioning since we may, by now, hope that these books will continue in a long series. About the many drawings of small animals with which Mr. Sanderson has illustrated his narrative there can be no reservations at all. They give the impression of being precisely right, of fitting themselves perfectly to the spirit and content of his text. They reveal, equally with the text, the peculiar keenness and originality, the warmth and humor, that invariably distinguish his observations.

Protecting Nature's Treasures

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION. By Ira N. Gabrielson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1941. 250 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

ONE of the likeliest causes for the failures of democracy is that the people, upon whom the responsibility of government eventually rests, are unable to grasp the long-range problems that depend on them for solution. We Americans have always been great when it came to dealing with an immediate and obvious emergency. But, as Dr. Gabrielson points out, the battle of conservation cannot be won in "a short, sharp engagement"; it "must be grim, tenacious warfare," extended in time and looking forward to generations beyond our own. Otherwise our children shall inherit, in place of the rich continent that was ours, a great American desert.

For the people to deal adequately

with a problem of such farflung complexity as conservation they must be impressed, by the competent experts, with the reality of that problem and the means available for its solution. No expert is more competent for this purpose than Dr. Ira Gabrielson, who has charge of the federal government's wildlife-conservation program, and it is unlikely that a clearer statement of the problem has appeared than this present volume. It is, therefore, a volume of outstanding importance. Though its emphasis is on the conservation of wildlife, specifically, Dr. Gabrielson repeatedly underlines the fact that "soil, water, forest, and wildlife conservation are only parts of one inseparable program." These organic resources exist in a state of mutual dependence: whatever the future may hold for any of them will be common to all of them. So the first half of this volume is devoted to an exposition of the factors involved in the conservation of our soil, water, forests, and