the bureau’s behavior and its records. Since Stephan was an example of the siege mentality that many have noted among late-nineteenth-century Catholics, Prucha’s “war” between Catholics and Protestants may well derive its flavor from the bureau director’s viewpoint. Prucha does recognize an irenic and ecumenical tone in Stephan’s successor, and he also recognizes the secularist trends of the era. Certainly, anti-Catholic bigots of the American Protective Association type opposed “sectarian appropriations” during the 1890s, and anti-Catholicism did not die out in 1900. But secularists interested in clarifying church-state issues as matters of public policy took positions on Mormonism, Bible-reading, and prayers in the tax-supported schools. They also supported the shift from voluntary and church-supported charitable efforts toward a government-funded social welfare system and constituted a significant nondenominational force in policy making. The net effect was a diminution of anti-Catholicism but also a decline of anti-Protestantism. Both were fortunate and fortunately coincidental.

Indiana University-Purdue University, Donald L. Kinzer

Indianapolis


Few historians dispute the importance of the first three decades of the twentieth century to the development of American agriculture. Much of the scholarship in this period, however, focuses on technological innovation rather than on intellectual or social transformations. The secondary literature in this field is admirable for its technical depth, but it is less satisfactory in its treatment of the ideological forces which planned and engineered the twentieth-century agricultural revolution. Similarly the reaction of society to massive institutional and societal reform in the countryside is almost ignored.

David B. Danbom in The Resisted Revolution analyzes the intellectual and social forces which both promoted and resisted the conversion of the American farm from the locus of a preindustrial life-style to the physical plant of an efficient business enterprise. Danbom collects all of the various groups interested in agricultural reform into the Country Life Movement. The author then analyzes the factions of this movement in terms of
their differences in rhetoric, methods, and motivations. One faction of the movement, the "urban agrarians," consisted of subscribers to the agrarian myth who used it to show the comparative evil of the city. Their interest in rural reform was motivated by the differences they found between the idealized American yeomen of an earlier age and the actual inhabitants of America's farms. This discrepancy between the ideal husbandman and the farmer of reality was attributed by the urban agrarians to a slow degeneration of the rural population caused by decaying rural institutions. Thus the urban agrarians undertook a mission to upgrade the rural environment and, thereby, to restore the American farmer to an earlier standard of moral, civic, and spiritual virtue. The second major component of the movement viewed the farmer as antiprogressive, decadent, and inefficient in comparison to the more sophisticated urban laborer. This group believed the reform of rural America and the rehabilitation of the farmer were vital in eliminating the economic drag that a backward agricultural sector placed upon a booming urban-industrial nation. In their view the farm had to be transformed into an efficient and interdependent support facility for an economy increasingly based upon urban-industrial standards.

Danbom argues that the members of the Country Life Movement regarded agriculture as a naturally subordinate part of the American economy and society. The farm was to be restructured upon the model of the efficient urban factory. The purpose of this renovation was not the amelioration of the lives of rural citizens; rather, it was motivated by hopes of aiding the urban worker to acquire cheap and plentiful food and fiber. The author claims that rural reforms were engineered by persons who thought in terms of industrial and urban priorities and standards. Interestingly, Danbom interprets the programs of the United States Department of Agriculture as the product of strong urban priorities and little concern for rural needs and aspirations. Danbom views the emphasis of the extension worker and the county agent on high farm production, which fostered both low farm and food prices, to be the result of USDA goals that were based on urban needs and wants.

Danbom has offered a most interesting and stimulating interpretation of the agricultural revolution of the twentieth century. While his thesis is far from being completely established, it will undoubtedly stimulate much-needed research by social and intellectual historians in the area of rural-urban
conflict. Danbom's work is an important contribution to the historiography of American agriculture.

*The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore*


In this succinct, useful study H. Roger Grant surveys the politics of the fire and life insurance industries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He examines the movements for the reform of the industries in the five states that spearheaded changes—New York, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, and Texas. A final chapter deals with the drive for regulation by the federal government.

As revealed by Grant, the reform movements were complex. In the initial stages the insurance companies often joined policyholders and state insurance commissioners in pressing for legislation to bring order to and modernize their industries. All could usually agree upon the need to end such practices as rebating and twisting. As the title of his work suggests, Grant believes that the insurance men and consumers (policyholders) broke ranks on more far-reaching reforms. Life insurance men bitterly fought state efforts to regulate their investments and methods of doing business. In the fire insurance industry the hottest battles revolved around attempts by the states to set the insurance rates. Grant concludes that these latter actions resulted "most of all" from "a consumer crusade" (p. vii).

This work will be of value to anyone interested in government-business relations during the Progressive Era. Well-organized and capably written, it investigates a significant, but somewhat neglected, topic. The study is, however, marred by several shortcomings. Grant does not adequately relate his findings to those of other historians who have written on the same subject—Morton Keller, Albert Erlebacher, and the author of this review. While Grant generally recognizes the complexity of the various insurance reform movements, his account is, in places, simplistic, as he comes close to taking on the role of consumer-advocate. Still, these weaknesses aside, *Insurance Reform* is an important work that increases the understanding of the history of business and politics in the United States.

*Ohio State University, Columbus*