

Book Reviews

Bowen: The Years as Governor. By William J. Watt. (Indianapolis: Bierce Associates, Inc., 1981. Pp. [x], 308. Illustrations, appendixes, note on sources, notes, index. \$17.95.)

William J. Watt has written an informative and significant book about Dr. Otis R. Bowen, the only Hoosier ever to serve his state as governor for eight full consecutive years. Watt provides perceptive background regarding the political, economic, social, and cultural events of the Bowen years. Before serving as an executive assistant to Bowen throughout his two terms, Watt had been a writer and an editor for the Associated Press, then an administrative assistant to Lieutenant Governor Richard Folz in the preceding administration of Governor Edgar D. Whitcomb. Under Bowen, Watt served as news secretary and as liaison for various continuing and miscellaneous projects; these tasks necessitated frequent communication with the chief executive. The book, commenced months before the Bowen tenure ended, is based on party records, newspapers, oral interviews, personal recollections, legislative records, and the Bowen papers. The text is quite readable, but occasional misspelled words perhaps suggest some haste in writing and less copyediting than desirable.

Watt regards tax restructuring, in order to provide property tax relief, as the cornerstone and key innovation of the Bowen administration. He gives the governor quite favorable marks for his handling of such areas as transportation, energy shortage, natural disasters, coal strikes, and the Department of Natural Resources. Mental health, corrections, state police, and the Alcoholic Beverage Commission are discussed as troubled areas for which results were less successful. Bowen, Watt notes, often viewed accomplishments of the Department of Natural Resources among the top achievements of his administration. For these accomplishments the governor deserves much credit since he delegated substantial authority to Joseph D. Cloud, its capable director, and also approved the continuation of John Hillenbrand, a Democrat who had given outstanding service to previous administrations, as chairman of its two key commissions. Watt's account and evaluations should be extremely useful to historians, although as further information becomes available—including that from other participants—differing versions and conclusions may be expected concerning various issues.

Watt gives considerable attention to Bowen's personal views and qualities. Although quite fond of the governor, Watt is frequently candid in assessing the governor's strengths and his limitations. The author appropriately notes that during recent decades managing Indiana state government has become a demanding and difficult enterprise, but an enterprise vastly different from running a large business. Watt portrays Bowen as a very astute and skillful politician, which he certainly was. He also describes the governor as a somewhat more liberal Republican than most party leaders and as one who sought to enlarge the party's base among the electorate. While this reviewer agrees with Watt that Bowen was an unusually popular governor, probably the most popular one since the pioneer era, in some respects the popularity of Governor William Hendricks, 1822-1825, was even more pronounced.

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Indian Traders on the Middle Border: The House of Ewing, 1827-54. By Robert A. Trennert, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. Pp. xiii, 271. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$17.95.)

While Robert A. Trennert was engaged in research on a previous book, he discovered a significant omission in scholarly literature about federal Indian policy. He learned that the economic and political activities of the firm of W. G. & G. W. Ewing Company, who traded with Indian tribes living in a vast region from Indiana to Kansas, had been neglected. The study which resulted "is a chronicle of frontier business and political influence" as practiced by the brothers William G. and George W. Ewing; as Trennert carefully states, it is "not a study of Indians" (p. xii).

The Ewing family moved from Pennsylvania through New York's Genesee Valley, Michigan, and Ohio to Fort Wayne, Indiana, farming and trading as they went. Alexander Ewing, the patriarch of the clan, settled at Fort Wayne in 1822, built a log store and tavern, and in 1823 purchased land in the center of the city. Soon the firm of A. Ewing & Sons began a thriving Indian trade centered at Fort Wayne. They plunged into this highly competitive business and gradually carved out an increasingly larger share of the trade with the Miami and Potawatomi tribes. Indians debtors settled their accounts at cession treaties when they received cash, annuities, and parcels of land. After 1827, when Alexander died, the twenty-five-