

significance to many. Similarly, the coming of the telegraph to the state, the events of the Civil War, and the coming of the first railroad car ferry in 1869, are matters of interest and curiosity, I am sure, to certain readers. Yet, the chronology is good and is probably already longer than the author would wish.

The bibliography is entitled, "A Selected List of Books on Michigan History." It makes no attempt to be an exhaustive bibliography, or to describe the character and scope of the several titles. It is a reading list of general interest on the subject, of titles which might be expected to be found in many local libraries. It is, therefore, tailored for its anticipated reader—to be an asset rather than a source of frustration. The index of fourteen pages should prove very adequate for the students and general public for whom the book was intended.

I feel that this book will fulfill the hopes of Munson, who made it possible, and the expectations of the Historical Commission of Michigan, who selected the author and fostered the publication.

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Henry D. Brown

*The People's Health: A History of Public Health in Minnesota to 1948.* By Philip D. Jordan. (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society, 1953, pp. xii, 524. Illustrations and index. \$5.00.)

Through the interest and generosity of the Mayo Association, Philip D. Jordan was provided with the opportunity to write *The People's Health*, a history of Minnesota's public health program. The writer, an established author and historian, expresses his own basic ideas on the subject by quoting from a recent national report which declares: "Health is not the mere absence of disease but a positive state of body and mind, conducive to full and productive life"; and from Henry I. Bowditch who said that public health is "the most important matter with which any community could concern itself."

*The People's Health* tells about the unfolding of a great public enterprise in Minnesota. It gives an account of the continuous expansion of the effectiveness and range of sanitary science and preventive medicine. The reader is

encouraged and inspired by this public health narrative which once more tells how sanitarians have accomplished so much with so little. Though a wide gulf separates the people's understanding from that of their better informed public health leaders, the public plods along, always increasing its pace to provide public health with more active cooperation and better financial support.

The first two chapters, on the salubrity of the Minnesota climate and the Civil War career of Minnesota's first secretary of the State Health Board, provide a slow start for the monograph. Quickly recovering from these asides, the author writes an unusually fine history. His plan is topical, but he writes at length about the public health activities of three secretaries to the State Health Board: Charles N. Hewitt (1872-1897), Henry M. Bracken (1897-1919), and Albert J. Chesley (1921- ). Each of these able men has provided leadership on the national level as well as on the state.

Although the author immediately calls attention to the omission of a full discussion of finances, organization, and administration, a chapter on each would greatly help the reader and strengthen the book. Judging from material given, the Minnesota public health system, administratively, is a state-level organization with little in the way of a local base. Public health officials throughout the state are usually state appointees, and the influence of two large cities has kept the program primarily urban rather than rural. When the legislature rejected the State Board of Health's proposal to establish the county health unit, a plan of eight districts was tried. As is the case in several other states, the district did not prove to be local enough and failed to meet high expectations. Internally, a standard public health organization evolved and, after several reorganizations, on January 1, 1947, there were five sections, as follows: (1) Departmental Administration; (2) Medical Laboratories; (3) Environmental Sanitation; (4) Preventable Diseases; (5) Special Services.

Quite accurately, the rise and growth of public health nursing are appraised as the foremost of all hopeful developments in public health. Minnesota's great public health leaders and their achievements are warmly commended, but the writer finds more to condemn than to condone in some phases of his state's public health record. He finds fault with his fellow citizens for tolerating polluted water supplies and

impure food products and for defeats that public health programs have met in the state legislature.

In *The People's Health* the reader is given a uniquely comprehensive view of what is taking place in the field of public health generally and what is on the threshold. People are becoming aroused, and part of their concern, identified as a facet of their search for security, is a fear of private medical practice on the one hand or a fear of government intervention on the other. Between these polar positions, according to a statement quoted from a recent federal study on health, "group hospital programs offer the only satisfactory solution." The author sees the federal government as one of the main opportunities to increase the number of physicians, dentists, nurses, health institutions, and hospital beds; and to make these health essentials available to all who need them. Certainly the rapid appearance of hundreds of hospitals and thousands of hospital beds in the last few years seems to justify his viewpoint. The writer takes special note of a recent report made by eight hundred distinguished national leaders which stated "that only a combination of the efforts of local, state, and federal units could possibly result in a major improvement in public health."

The monograph is a desirable departure from the technical pattern of public health history which prevailed until the First World War. *The People's Health* is wide in scope and high in reader interest. Its influence will doubtless be very significant as it is a much-needed instrument in behalf of a valuable social program which is dependent upon public appreciation.

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*The Social Sciences in Historical Study: A Report of the Committee on Historiography.* Social Science Research Council, Bulletin 64. (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1954, pp. x, 181. Index. Paper \$1.75; Cloth \$2.75.)

Historians have made a practice to don the hairshirt periodically to force themselves to re-examine the nature of their craft, or is it their art? In 1946, under the auspices of