Lester M. Hunt's "The Governor Takes a Firm Stand" is amusing satire on the evasiveness of Governor Harold W. Handley at press conferences, but it could just as easily have been written about nearly any Indiana governor or political leader. The selection from Abe Martin—certainly a better interpreter of the Hoosier than Westbrook Pegler—includes the quip that "No normally constituted feller kin read a daily newspaper without congratulatin' himself that he ain't in jail or a candidate for office" (p. 61). This quip takes on additional meaning after reading Dateline: Indiana.

Indiana University

Donald F. Carmony


In 1909 a dirt-surfaced two-and-a-half mile automobile racing track was opened in Indianapolis and dedicated to the proposition that upon it the infant motorcar would mature. The Indianapolis Speedway was to function as a kind of laboratory. Here all manner of inventions, developments, and innovations could be assayed for use in ordinary passenger cars. This pious pronouncement of the Speedway founders was so firmly implanted in the American consciousness at the time, and has been so skillfully propagandized since, that it lives today with the force of law.

The Race is the latest attempt by a new photographer and a sports reporter to preserve the tradition and legend of the Speedway. The Introduction states that "this is a book about human beings and human emotions, illuminated by a sporting event." The cover suggests that "The Race recreates the whole experience, from the moment the first car is unloaded till the last visitor has gone home and only empty garages remain."

The photographs and text do not, however, accurately recreate the whole experience. Nothing in this volume suggests that the true function of the Speedway is to make money. No words challenge the cliché that the track is a proving ground for the automobile industry. American manufacturers are largely indifferent to it, and the major producers have their own proving grounds, better suited to the purpose than Indianapolis. The public has been deceived into thinking that the tremendous annual attendance at Indianapolis reflects an informed enthusiasm on the part of the American public. Most of those attending have no basic understanding of automobile racing as such. They have no technical understanding of driving skill, and anything but flat-out speed is lost on them. The answer to the question as to why they come will continue to perplex observers for years.

This publication will certainly preserve the legend and tradition of the Indianapolis race. Most readers will want to await a more penetrating analysis of the Indianapolis phenomenon, but for the racing-car enthusiasts The Race is probably a must.

Purdue University

Paul E. Million, Jr.