

interests. Miller also points out that Crump outlived his time: in 1948, for instance, he supported the Dixiecrat ticket and denounced (unsuccessfully) senatorial candidate Estes Kefauver as a tool of Communism. The reader interested in Memphis and Tennessee politics will find this book informative.

The author's reliance upon scraps of information in Crump's papers, however, leads to two weaknesses. First, Miller's judgments too often reflect uncritically the pro-Crump views of his sources. The author maintains that Crump was "truthful" in denying "direct knowledge" of the means used to register Negro voters (p. 103). Given Crump's detailed knowledge concerning other phases of Tennessee politics, this assertion is debatable at best. Similarly, Miller does not try to determine the extent of ballot-box stuffing by the Crump machine. Finally, the reader finds Crump called upon to "engineer a compromise" to determine the House leadership in Washington in 1933. Crump had no such authority; and the man named majority leader was Joseph Byrns of Tennessee, not Byrnes, as the author (and his source, the notes of Crump's secretary) would have us believe (p. 179).

Second, Miller is unable to resist trivia. The reader is regaled (p. 39) with love letters from various suitors to Crump's future wife; he reads (pp. 125-26) letters from an aide of Crump's describing Washington in World War I; and he is told (p. 169) that Crump's sons loved their parents. Yet these passages give no insight, respectively, into the character of Mrs. Crump, into Crump's views on World War I, or into Crump as a parent. These and similar passages might better have been omitted.

Indiana University

James T. Patterson

The Talkative President: The Off-the-Record Press Conferences of Calvin Coolidge. Edited by Howard H. Quint and Robert H. Ferrell. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1964. Pp. xi, 276. Index. \$6.00.)

"Silent Cal" Coolidge has never been an easy man to interpret. His personal papers in the Library of Congress are disappointingly thin, while his published writings run to the platitudinous and didactic. Had he nothing to say? Was he a virtual nonentity? Biographies by William Allen White and Claude M. Fuess (written about twenty-five years ago) are excellent in some respects, and they reject so critical a view of Coolidge. The present volume affords the best opportunity yet to appraise his ideas on a variety of subjects. Having learned of Coolidge's off-the-record press conferences, the editors succeeded in finding typed transcripts deposited in the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts. They have included in their volume about one sixth of the transcript material.

The press conferences began in August, 1923, and occurred twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, throughout Coolidge's years in the White House. This allegedly silent little man from Vermont was the first President to formalize the White House news conference. A dozen

or so reporters assembled in the west wing of the White House after first submitting written questions to the Presidential secretary. Coolidge then commented on those questions that had passed the screening process. He also made announcements and sometimes with annoyance would permit an oral question. Reporters were under an injunction never to quote the President and to attribute nothing to him directly. Once these rules were made clear, Coolidge's relations with the press were surprisingly cordial. He apparently enjoyed the sessions, and he skillfully made use of his opportunities for publicity.

One begins this book, and completes it, with a predominant interest in the conferences and in the fact that Coolidge could perpetrate such a political hoax. Possibly for some, the Presidential statements will have no less importance; for Coolidge had much to say on a wide range of topics, domestic and foreign. The press conferences give further evidence that the President was a shrewd politician. There are indications of wider interests and of a greater tolerance and sensitivity, as toward foreign peoples, than this reviewer at least had suspected. At the same time, no comments on prohibition, the Scopes trial, or many matters that aroused excitement in the 1920's are included. The editors take note of Coolidge's limitations (for example, his lack of interest in ideas for their own sake); but they conclude, as readers surely will too, that he had a "surprisingly wide comprehension of public issues."

One must thank Professors Quint and Ferrell for making this source available and for their superb editorial work. They have broken up the transcript material and arranged it chronologically within topics. Background information and analysis are provided at the beginning of each chapter and in italics throughout the Presidential statements. The editors' comment is often far-ranging and perceptive. With the framework thus provided, the book can almost be thought of as a monograph. In one respect the editors may have done Coolidge a disservice: their own prose is lively if not sparkling—often in contrast to the humdrum remarks of a talkative President.

University of Illinois

J. Leonard Bates

The Republican Party, 1854-1964. By George H. Mayer. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. Pp. ix, 563. Notes, index. \$9.75.)

Professor Mayer hopes to modify the idea that the Republican party "exists nine months every four years to conduct a campaign for the Presidency" (p. ix). He has therefore written a big book, recounting the GOP's first hundred years. He writes in a clear, concise, and often witty style, in a well balanced allotment of space, and with impressive research. His book contains many illuminating anecdotes and analyses and is a brave attempt to synthesize and judge a very difficult subject.

He begins with a good discussion of why Americans have always loved politics, especially in the nineteenth century, and proceeds election by election through American political history. But despite his impressive research, he produces few fresh facts and no discernible view of the party as a whole. He offers little explanation for its early success and contemporary weakness. His work is generally descriptive and un-