

Book Reviews

Paul V. McNutt: Portrait of a Hoosier Statesman. By I. George Blake. (Indianapolis: Central Publishing Company, Inc., 1966. Pp. xv, 399. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$5.95.)

Using the available collections of source materials and interviewing numerous political insiders of the 1930's and 1940's, most of all Frank M. McHale, Blake has written a most readable biography of Paul V. McNutt. The volume covers McNutt's career as Indiana University law school dean; as state and national commander of the American Legion; as Indiana's governor from 1933 to 1937; as Philippine high commissioner from 1937 to 1939 and again from 1945 to 1947, during the Philippine transition from commonwealth to national independence; as head of the Federal Security Agency from 1939 to 1945; and as director of the Office of Community War Services and as chairman of the important War Manpower Commission during World War II. McNutt emerges, truthfully, as one of the ablest of the wartime administrators, along with Harry Hopkins, James F. Byrnes, and Donald M. Nelson.

This biography is distinctly favorable to McNutt without being downright eulogistic. Somewhat reminiscent of nineteenth-century biographies, it gives copious quotations from letters to McNutt and editorial comment about him. Curiously enough, unlike the old style biographies, there are relatively few quotations from the letters and speeches of McNutt himself.

McNutt's story is essentially one of frustration. With all his ability, administrative competence, oratory, good looks, charisma (to a degree), and "availability," McNutt never achieved the opportunity he craved to be nominated for president or vice president. The giant figure of Franklin D. Roosevelt forever stood in his way. Roosevelt used McNutt's administrative abilities, but he played a cat-and-mouse game with him and boxed him in politically. New Deal insiders suspected that McNutt was not a "real" liberal, and Roosevelt and James A. Farley never forgave the Hoosier's failure to support FDR at the Chicago convention of 1932.

The author devotes too little attention to this convention, for it was the turning point in McNutt's career. On the other hand, he devotes too much attention to McNutt's presidential candidacy in 1940 and to his dramatic withdrawal from the vice-presidential race at the Chicago convention that year, for these activities constituted mere *tour de force*. Because Roosevelt and his cohorts dominated the situation in 1940, McNutt stood no chance of either the presidential or vice-presidential nomination, whether Roosevelt ran for a third term or not. Blake implicitly provides the evidence for this conclusion, but he shrinks from making it explicit.

McNutt and his advisers, in 1932 and 1940, were victims of Indiana's political mores, which, for a variety of reasons deeply rooted in Indiana's history, exaggerated sheer political organization and maneuver and underestimated national opinion and the mass media. There is irony here. The very year that saw the collapse of McNutt's presidential and vice-presidential "booms" also saw Wendell Willkie, another

Hoosier, win the Republican presidential nomination by turning his back on Indiana political traditions, the old-fashioned ways in politics, and exploiting the new ways of the mass media.

Although McNutt matured with time and experience, impressions of the earlier man persisted. He was thought to be the perennial "big-man-on-campus" type, one who gathered honors as mere personal trophies. As late as 1930 admirers were writing him that they were confident he would become a "Big Shot." A widespread belief that McNutt at bottom was a chauvinist and a jingo would not down. McNutt rarely espoused an unpopular cause or flew in the face of conventional wisdom. This is not unusual in politicians, but it is unusual in politicians of McNutt's intelligence, whether they be liberals or conservatives.

A close reading of this biography reveals that McNutt was not as cold or as arrogant a person as many supposed. Nevertheless, it is a pity that a man of his large gifts was so bereft, at least in his public "image," of the humility and compassion of a John Worth Kern, of the folksy and salty wit of a Thomas Riley Marshall, of the impish maverick qualities of a Wendell Willkie.

University of Florida

William G. Carleton

The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest. By John G. Clark. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966. Pp. xi, 324. Notes, tables, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

Some of the most provocative recent economic history has been in the areas of transportation and land resources. *The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest* represents a contribution to this growing historiography. John Clark exhaustively examines the fluctuating grain market for the antebellum period in the Old Northwest. He traces the shift from the dominance of the Mississippi River system, New Orleans, and the southern markets to the East-West axis with the evolution of canals and railroads.

In contrast to the conclusions of Harry Scheiber and others, Clark believes that the early railroad development in Illinois and Indiana gave these states a competitive marketing advantage over Ohio. Though Clark abstains from specifically challenging the econometricians (nowhere is there evidence in his bibliography that he utilized the studies of Robert Fogel and other practitioners of econometrics), his findings are in direct antithesis to theirs. According to Clark, the railroads, instead of producing a drain on the economy, "provided the essential catalytic action for growth" (p. 264). In agreement with Scheiber's incisive study of internal improvements in Ohio, Clark argues that the railroads had a revolutionary economic impact, although he refines Scheiber's conclusions by suggesting that the "lake route continued to dominate" through the 1880's (p. 287).

In some respects this is a model monograph, thoroughly researched, systematically organized, and tightly written; Clark has rigidly defined his subject. At times the reader feels that his narrative is the direct transposition of line graphs to words. Most readers who have