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Book Review: People's Court

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you do, anything you say is not likely to change the picture. When you litigate you are usually in controversy with a member of society and your ability to show the community that your position is right is vitally important. It is unreasonable to expect that all lawsuits should be won, but it is fair to expect that every case selected for litigation must present equities that will appeal to a jury's sense of justice. It is then possible to lose the battle and still retain public approval. When so much depends on what you do to the public in the courtroom, extreme caution in the selection of cases to be there presented cannot be ignored.

The success of business does not depend to any great extent on any system or program that may be in operation. Business growth and expansion relies upon the intelligence, vigor, vision, and integrity of its management. Wise selection and use of men possessed of certain knowledge and experience weighs heavily on the side of success of any industry. Life insurance, so dependent on public interest, public service, public acceptance and approval, should be foremost to search for and explore the latent talents of men whose knowledge can be wisely used. It is such a thought that prompted this effort to point out that experience in the courtroom carries with it the ability to counsel when to avoid the dangers of trial and when to seek the advantage of that right.

Book Review

PEOPLE'S COURT, by *Edward C. Fisher, Judge of the Municipal Court, Lincoln, Nebraska*, published by the Northwestern University Traffic Institute, Evanston, Illinois, 1947. Price \$3. 164 pp.

Ever since the publication of George Warren's *Traffic Courts*, there has been an acute need for a volume written by a traffic court judge which would be of assistance to other judges of courts with jurisdiction over violations of the motor vehicle laws.

Warren's book, fortified by an intensive nationwide survey, was the first definitive work on the subject. It was written from an objective viewpoint, which served to point out the general ineffectiveness of the courts in this field. Judges and prosecutors welcomed this important work which marked the beginning of activity under the national program for improving traffic courts, undertaken jointly by the American Bar Association and the National Safety Council.

Approximately 300 traffic court conferences have been held throughout the country, and these served to demonstrate that judges everywhere were vitally interested in exchanging information on their experiences in the courtroom, the handling of different types of violators of traffic laws, the proper relationship between the traffic court judges and other public officials, and methods used in arriving at proper fines and penalties. One of the earliest supporters of this type of conference was the author of the volume under review.

During the course of the author's judicial career he had occasion to make many addresses on traffic law enforcement, traffic safety and the proper administration of justice. These accumulated and became the raw material for *People's Court*. Some four years ago I had the opportunity of examining this material and became impressed with the thoroughness with which the author had tackled the various subjects. I readily agreed with the author that he should make every effort to publish this material and make it available to other judges. It is fortunate indeed that he has been successful in securing publication of this material, which he has condensed into eleven chapters. The chapters headings are: I. The Traffic Court, II. The Judge and the Court, III. Fines and Penalties, IV. Violator Types and Their Stories, V. The Prosecutor and the Court, VI. The Police Officer, VII. The Reporter and the Court, VIII. The Lawyer and the Court, IX. The Citizen in Court, X. The Drunken Driver and XI. Safety Organizations and the Court.

Every judge, especially traffic court judges, should read this book to obtain a keen insight into the workings of a judicial mind operating in the same particular sphere of judicial administration. They will find much which will be of interest to them. The chapter on Violator Types and Their Stories is especially well done and every judge undoubtedly has his own way of classifying violator types.

Fisher's categories include Fixers, Excusers, Good Sports, Personalities, which are further classified as "Perfect Citizen," "Taxpayer and Citizen," "Rabbit's Foot," "Vindictiveness," "Surly," "Impecunious," "Military Hero," "Pedantic" and "Night Owl."

The chapter on Fines and Penalties contains excellent material which every judge will find challenging and provocative. The other chapters of the book are susceptible of a double-edged interpretation. In the first instance the judge's viewpoint is quietly stressed and diplomatically phrased. *Then one becomes suddenly conscious of the fact that excellent advice is being given to the prosecutor, the police officer, the reporter, the lawyer, the citizen, the drunken driver and safety council officials.*

The author amply demonstrates the necessity for every judge knowing something about the specialized knowledge of traffic laws, traffic safety education, traffic engineering and traffic law enforcement. He also recognizes the importance of the court in the judicial structure and its relationship to government. He realizes how necessary it is to maintain a fine balance between adherence to sound principles of judicial administration and the expediency required in the handling of the great mass of traffic cases flowing through this court. His views will undoubtedly receive acceptance by the majority of the judges who have an opportunity to read this book. To the new judge this book will serve as advance warning of the pitfalls which he may encounter in his judicial work.

Whereas Warren in his book told what was wrong with the traffic courts, Judge Fisher attempts to impart some of the know-how of trying traffic cases.

JAMES P. ECONOMOS.

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