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Book Reviews

Evans Holbrook

University of Michigan Law School

Gordon Stoner

University of Michigan Law School

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BOOK REVIEWS

BETTER CITY PLANNING FOR BRIDGEPORT. By John Nolen, Consultant on City Planning. With a **REPORT ON LEGAL METHODS OF CARRYING OUT THE CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE CITY PLAN FOR BRIDGEPORT.** By Frank Backus Williams, of the New York Bar. Published by the City Plan Commission of Bridgeport, Connecticut. 1916. pp. xx, 159.

Recent years have seen the awakening of considerable interest in city planning among the better citizens of American cities. Not an inconsiderable number of our cities have taken steps toward the adoption of uniform plans for their physical development, some of which have been very ambitious. Among the more ambitious proposals is that for the city of Bridgeport, Connecticut. A committee, known as the City Planning Commission of Bridgeport, was appointed by the mayor of said city in 1913 to make a survey of the existing conditions of traffic, streets, docks, transportation facilities, parks, housing plans and kindred matters in the city and to prepare and recommend to the city council a plan for the future development of the city. The committee engaged the expert services of Mr. John Nolen, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, as city planner, and of Mr. Frank Backus Williams, as legal counsel. The volume here reviewed consists almost entirely of the reports of these experts.

The larger portion of the work (some 111 pages) is given over to the report of the expert on city planning, and is profusely illustrated with photographs and maps. The report is confined strictly to the problems of the city of Bridgeport, but as the problems of that city, or many of them, are duplicated in many other cities in the country this portion of the volume will be found very helpful by the officials and citizens of other cities in working out plans for making their own cities better places in which to live and work.

The latter portion of the book (covering about 36 pages) is occupied by the legal expert's report and opinion on the legal questions involved in putting into operation the plan proposed. In this portion of the book are discussed the legal means of forcing private owners to conform to a general city plan, the city's power of excess or incidental condemnation, and its powers of building regulation and districting. These are live legal problems which are now demanding and will continue to demand for years to come, the attention of lawyers interested in the problems of municipal corporation law. The courts have only just begun to examine these problems concretely and a definite statement of the limit to which a city may go and beyond which it may not go in the exercise of these powers is difficult to formulate; because of the newness of the problem in concrete form one can only prophesy what limit the courts will fix. These problems are good examples of those situations in constitutional law where the decisions of the court are so greatly affected and changed by the growth of scientific knowledge and of public opinion. In dealing with these questions the courts are very likely to go

counter to some of their general expressions of principle in earlier cases which were broader than necessary to the decision of the cases then at bar.

The text is not in technical language, but is as comprehensible to the layman as the character of the questions will permit. The lawyer may criticise it as avoiding the detailed reasoning desirable in the study of these new and difficult problems. This, however, is not to be expected of an opinion. The text is liberally annotated with notes of cases, references to statutes and to recent articles in periodicals. The material referred to is the newest and latest on the subject. The whole opinion is suggestive and full of interest to the lawyer whose practice takes him into the field of municipal corporations and constitutional law; and the exercise by cities of the powers discussed touches private property rights so closely that a greater number of lawyers will be drawn into such practice when the attempt to use such powers becomes more frequent. In this report the reader will find in condensed form not only the latest ideas on these subjects, but also one of the few collections of references to the late cases on the same.

G. S.

FORMS, RULES AND GENERAL ORDERS IN BANKRUPTCY, collated, revised and annotated by Marshall S. Hagar, of the New York Bar, and Thomas Alexander, clerk of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, and United States Commissioner. Second Edition by Marshall S. Hagar. Albany, N. Y. Matthew Bender & Co. 1916. pp. liv, 909.

The first edition of this excellent form-book has already been noticed in this Review (12 MICH. L. REV. 165). The second edition contains many valuable new forms, including a number which are the result of experience in administering the amendments of 1910, which were still rather uncertain of effect at the time of the first edition of this work. The annotation of the forms has been brought down to date, and is an extremely valuable feature; if the annotation were a little more specific as to the holdings of the cases cited, it would be much more valuable. On the whole the work is a most efficient tool for any lawyer who has any bankruptcy practice.

E. H.