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Pritchett: THE ROOSEVELT COURT

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THE ROOSEVELT COURT. By *C. Herman Pritchett*. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1948. Pp. xvi, 314. \$5.

Dr. Pritchett, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago and formerly associated with the T.V.A. and the Department of Labor, has analyzed the trends and cleavages in the opinions of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1937 to 1947. The author has touched upon almost every important decision of this decade, placing them in rough categories dealing with business regulation and the commerce power, civil liberties, procedural safeguards in criminal trials, administrative agencies, and labor law. The extensive reference to the cases has resulted in a broad and accurate review of ten years of law in the making, but the breadth of the field has compelled a sketchiness that may trouble a reader who is without a prior familiarity with the cases. The author makes extensive use of a statistical method in evaluating and analyzing the trends of the Court. Twenty-five tables and two charts are of considerable interest both to the layman and the lawyer in showing the agreements and disagreements of the present members of the Court. However, the value and accuracy of these absolute symbols when used to delineate and examine differences that are often far from absolute may, as the author admits, be questioned. Questionable too is the author's concession to writing convenience by the free use of "right," "left," "liberal," and "conservative" in dealing with almost every judicial controversy. Nevertheless, as a journalistic history of the past ten years of the Supreme Court the book is of considerable value. As an important political study of the doctrines of the present Court the book is somewhat weakened by the breadth of the subject. As a result, when the author takes sides, he is forced to be dogmatic for the sake of brevity. The concluding chapter entitled "The Plight of a Liberal Court" far exceeds the rest of the book in perception and analysis. It is an acute study of the cleavage of the Roosevelt Court and its causes. The controversies arising from the claims of the various pretenders to the mantle of Brandeis and Holmes and the different conceptions of their tradition is expertly handled.