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Spero: GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER

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GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER. By *Sterling Spero*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Remsen Press. 1948. Pp. ix, 497. \$5.65.

While labor problems generally have been the subject of much recent study, the relation between federal, state and municipal governments and their 6,000,000 employees has largely been forgotten by the writers. Dr. Spero, a professor in the Graduate Division for Training in Public Service in New York University, does much to alleviate this deficiency. Part I of the book deals with the essential nature of the public employment relationship, analyzing longstanding assumptions concerning the special position of the sovereign employer. The policy considerations involved in the right of government employees to organize, to strike and to engage in political activity are well presented. It is the author's position that a balance must be maintained between the real requirements of administrative authority and the fullest possible rights of the employee. From this point of view administrative and legislative restrictions are criticized. Part II is a detailed history of labor organizations in various governmental fields. The organization of government laborers, army and navy employees, white collar workers, postal employees, firemen, policemen and teachers are treated separately with special emphasis on their peculiar problems. Comparisons are carefully drawn and distinctions noted. Dr. Spero does little more in this section than present his facts, but the conclusion is clear that government has often been far less than a "model employer." The studies of the post office economy drives and the Boston Police strike are especially interesting. In the concluding section, Part III, the author discusses the applicability of methods of handling private labor disputes to government labor relations. Admitting differences in the problems, he concludes that much might be learned from the use of such devices as private collective bargaining and arbitration. His analysis of the legal problems involved in the use of these methods by the govern-

ment is able although brief. Throughout the book Dr. Spero's keen sympathy for the government employee is evident; however, it does not affect his scholarly objectivity and skill in presentation of one of the most important present labor problems.