

Who Isn't an Economist?

Economists at Home and Abroad. Issued by S Kesava Iyengar, Director, The Indian Institute of Economics, Hyderabad (Dn), 1953. Price Rs 9.

Who isn't an economist? This question is prompted not only by the title of this publication but even more by its contents. The editor has adopted the singular criterion of 'Interest in Economics' to guide his choice of 'Who's Who among Economists at Home and Abroad.' On this, it would be difficult to exclude anyone other than the Dalai Lama of Tibet before the Liberation or the fortunate few who attain Nirvana. As it is, Professor Iyengar has very nearly succeeded in excluding trained economists. The preface there is also an introduction and a foreword for good measure—artlessly begins with the pertinent observation that "imperfection is a characteristic of God's creation, but it is the special characteristic of this publication". Having said that, the editor has left nothing undone to justify the claims of his publication to imperfection.

The array of economists at home and abroad, living and dead—for it is in parts also a Who was Who—is as cosmopolitan in its composition as the French Foreign Legion. No one with even the remotest 'interest in economics' has been excluded. The crowded bandwagon contains ministers (prime, chief, and those with and without portfolios), civil servants, gentlemen-farmers, socialites, rotarians and Razakars, physicians and philanthropists, financiers and freemasons, dons and donois (preferably of the newly-started Indian Institute of Economics); One is almost apologetic in numbering the professional economist in this motley crew. The descriptions of some of Professor Iyengar's "economists" are bizarre in the extreme. A nineteenth-century statesman is described as "Founder of the Economic Development of Hyderabad in the middle of the 19th century". Truly an incarnation of Schumpeter's 'heroic' innovating entrepreneur! A departed captain of industry is acclaimed as the "Champion of National Economics".

The errors, printing or otherwise, do not have even the pedestrian virtue of self-consistency. The reader may turn to any page, and like the reader of Thomas a Kempis or of Maishah's Principles will find in it a hitherto undiscovered source of illumination or delight—more of the

latter though. Or it may be that having pitched upon the subject of a photograph—a feat in itself since most of these have a strong resemblance to those taken at seances—the knowledgeable reader will make the further discovery that the photograph and the name below do not necessarily relate to the same person! Evidently the relationship between the name and the photograph, as in the case of some of the functions of the mathematical economist, is purely stochastic. No less a person than the Secretary of the Indian Economic Association is a victim of this enforced impersonation in photographs. The patient reader will be vouchsafed further insights. Authors, publications, and universities have been freely reshuffled with a most charming disregard for facts. Here is a random-sample which is also fully representative of the level of accuracy attained in the Who's Who. Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders has been prematurely retired from the Directorship of the London School of Economics; Professor Robbins' Marshall Lectures on the Economic Problem in Peace and War are fathered on his colleague Sir Arnold Plant; a devout Cantabrigian like Maurice Dobb is attached to Oxford; Richard Stone finds

himself on the staff of London University; Professor Austin Robinson emerges as the author of Sir Dennis Robertson's 'Essays in Monetary Theory'; a sedate and orthodox economist like Roy Harrod is credited with the authorship of a most revolutionary tract entitled "Are These Lordships Necessary?"; Professor Pigou, we learn, has also written a book on "Industrial Penetrations". Lest some of us have forgotten the fact, we are reminded that Alfred Marshall is (deceased). Evidently Edwin Carman is not, for he is not bracketed thus.

Yet, through all this tangled skein runs a scarlet thread—the Indian Institute of Economics, Hyderabad, and its life members, donors, and well-wishers. In fact the donor-motif is embarrassingly obtrusive. And persons whose most notable contributions to economic life—not to economics, which in any case is not important for the editor—have been overlooked, and referred to merely as donors of some institute or the other.

Altogether this Who's Who is a (lassie) essay in the art of elaborately and solemnly missing the point. The reader will certainly get his money's worth; the present reviewer did.

Labour Case Law

Industrial Law Digest. By N K Khare and L B Bhide. N M Tripathi Ltd, Bombay, 1953. Pages xiv+204. Price Rs 10.

THE Digest consists of two parts, Part I, which contains summaries of the decisions of the Labour Appellate Tribunal of India from 1st January 1952 to 23rd April 1953, can serve as a useful supplement to an earlier book entitled *Digest of Decisions of the Honourable Labour Appellate Tribunal of India* by Khare and Akruwala. Part II gives summaries of relevant decisions of the Federal Court of India, Supreme Court of India and the High Courts in this country from 1947 to mid-1953. During the post-war years, labour case law had a bewildering growth, with conflicting decisions on the same issues by different authorities. This has been shown in a Government of India publica-

tion *Industrial Awards in India—An Analysis*.

The Appellate Tribunal was set up in order to ensure co-ordination and uniformity in the settlement of labour disputes throughout the country. Publications, such as the one under review, may reveal how far the Tribunal has succeeded in laying down a standard case law in respect of labour matters. They prove useful to judicial authorities, employers and labour officers, employees and their trade unions, and others interested in labour legislation. It may, however, be considered whether it would not be possible for the Government to publish such Digests instead of leaving it to private enterprise. A Government publication would be authoritative and would recover its cost.