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Attention is called to conceptual and practical difficulties of estimating and measuring such variable as income and capital and the composition of the labor force. Interesting illustrative data are drawn from underdeveloped countries to show how institutional and demographic patterns might result in impressions substantially different from those commonly associated with more advanced economics. The productivity of resources and the growth of capital are examined in terms of production methods of the more backward areas. In several instances, where policy recommendations are examined, the author has taken a clear stand on important controversial issues. It is a stimulating little volume and well worth the attention of the reader.

Edwin H. Spengler.

The American Economy – by Alvin H. Hansen. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1957, New York. 199 pp.

This short treatise adds still another volume to Prof. Hansen's long list of publications relating to business cycles and economic instability. In this book, which is an outgrowth of a series of lectures given in 1956 at the University of Chicago, the author focuses attention upon the improved techniques of economic planning and the vastly enlarged role of democratic governments in attempting to maintain full employment. Against a background of American economic experiences during the last quarter-century, Prof. Hansen appraises the effectiveness of what he calls a „mixed public-private economy“ in which the powerful fiscal and monetary operations of an alert and informed government are playing a stabilizing and sustaining role. A large section of the book

is devoted to the Employment Act of 1946 and an examination of the roles of the Council of Economic Advisers and the Joint Committee on the Economic Report under the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. The central theme is that the role of the economist has profoundly changed. No longer able to rely on the assumptions of 19th century economics regarding the automatic market mechanism and selfadjusting character of laissez-faire capitalism, the modern professional economist must be prepared to make social-value judgements and to offer practical advice in developing policy decisions. In Hansen's view, the society is committed to the welfare state and to full employment. This position is consistent with Keynesian thinking and the reader is again reminded of the influence of Keynes upon current American policy in its shift to „high pressure, full-employment economics.“

Prof. Hansen points with satisfaction to the „fact“ that the American economy has operated since 1938 without any serious downturn and that „we have had virtually full employment and booming prosperity for sixteen years“. The implication is that this unparalleled period of economic growth and stability (except for the minor recessions of 1949 and 1954) is, at least in part, the result of business confidence bolstered by active government policy. No longer is private enterprise „left to shift as best it can in the storms of a fluctuating and inadequate market“. However, the author's recital of the role of monetary policy and the practical operation of the government machinery under the Employment Act of 1946 fails to reassure the reader. Throughout these chapters one is impressed with the economic indecision, the political conflict and the emergency nature of war needs which characterized these governmental controls. When good points were scored they were as much the result of happy

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accident as of wise planning. In the author's own words: „the task of guiding a dynamic and rapidly changing economy is immensurably difficult.“

One of the most challenging chapters in the opinion of this reviewer is that entitled: „Standards and Values in a Rich Society“, which presents a critical appraisal of the high living standards and gains of productivity in the United States, and the sharp contrasts still prevailing between extremes of wealth and poverty. A concluding statement of the goals of modern society is disappointingly brief. Included as an appendix is a short lecture on Woodrow Wilson as an economic reformer, in which the former president is credited with laying the foundations of later New Deal fiscal policies and paving the way for the welfare state.

Edwin H. Spengler.

I. Wayne Keller: Management Accounting for Profit Control, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1957. 435 s., 7 doll.

Dette må nærmest betegnes som en lærebog i industrielt regnskabsvæsen, en lærebog der nærmer sig håndbogens opbygning, idet de enkelte afsnit godt kan læses separat.

Forfatteren har megen teori og praksis på bagen, han er controller ved Armstrong Cork Company. Denne dobbeltstilling sætter ham i stand til at give en systematisk fremstilling samtidig med at hans eksempelvalg får en udpræget praktisk relevans.

Bogens røde tråd er contribution-tankegangen, man kunne sådan set betegne bogen som en lærebog i bidragsregnskab. Men den er mere end det. Der er en række afsnit med specialregnskaber for materialer, for arbejdskraft og for produktionsomkostninger og der er en række afsnit angående kontrol med samme.

I afsnit 9 og 10 behandles på en klar måde begreberne absorption costing og

direct costing, der står for fordelings- og bidragsregnskab.

Et selvstændigt kapitel diskuterer ud fra contribution-tankegangen de omkostningsproblemer der knytter sig til forbunden produktion og fælles produktion, og der findes de sædvanlige omtaler af og eksempler på budgetteringens betydning.

De interessanteste afsnit i bogen er vel kapitlerne 27-30. Her behandles det ofte aktuelle problem, om en virksomhed skal købe et mellemprodukt ude i byen eller om den skal leje det eller om den skal producere det selv. Ligeledes behandles break-even analysen, der efter forfatteren første gang fremtrådte i 1904. Han betegner den som „not a sharp tool“, men opregner nogle af de forudsætninger der må være opfyldt for at den kan anvendes, ligesom han giver et empirisk eksempel på konstruktion af et break-even diagram og nævner de særlige rentabilitetsmål, der knytter sig til denne fremstillingsform.

Bogen afsluttes med nogle tanker over prisfastsættelseskriterier.

Hvert af de 30 kapitler afsluttes med nogle „Review Questions“, hvori studenten kan tjekke om han har bebreget meningen med kapitlet, samt nogle opgaver man kan løse i forbindelse med dettes problemstilling. Et veludarbejdet index slutter bogen.

Anmelderen har stor respekt for dette arbejde, det er i bogstaveligste forstand tungtvejende. Det er det bl. a. fordi det er tung læsning.

Erik Johnsen.

Det økonomiske sekretariat: Økonomisk Årsoversigt, marts 1958. I kommission hos J. H. Schultz's Forlag, København, 94 s.

Formålet med den økonomiske årsoversigt er at give politikerne et billede af den økonomiske situation før det ny finansårs begyndelse. Tidspunktet (marts)