

Dette »sand Netto« var i perioden 1813—43: 19 kr. pr. ha bevokset areal. 1843—85: 44 kr., 1885—1900: 37 kr. og 1900—1915: 40 kr., og endelig 1915—36: 82 kr.

I perioden fra 1885 til verdenskrigen følges kasseoverskuddet og »sand Netto« på det nærmeste ad, bortset fra nogle år i 90'erne, hvor en voldsom storm i 1894 bevirkede et ekstraordinært stort salg af nåletræ.

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Der kunne være grund til at drøfte adskillige enkeltheder i denne økonomisk-historiske afhandling, men det skal undlades.

Kun skal til slut fremsættes et par kritiske bemærkninger i almindelighed.

De mange minutiøse undersøgelser og energiske bestræbelser for at opnå et så korrekt og nøjagtigt udtryk for tilvækst, hugst, priser og lønninger har naturligvis deres værdi i sig selv, men næppe af hensyn til den endelige beregning af nettoudbyttet.

Dette nettoudbytte beregnes som omtalt ved hjælp af uddrag af regnskaberne, hvad forfatteren i og for sig straks kunne være gået i gang med, hvis det udelukkende var dette nettoudbytte han ønskede belyst, hvad man af afhandlingens titel kunne forledes til at antage. Ganske vist krævedes en faktor for opsparring eller realisation, men den faktor fremgår jo af taksationsresultaterne i forbindelse med de udarbejdede driftsplaner og hugststatistiken.

Dette er ikke i og for sig en kritik af forfatterens arbejde, men blot en oplysning til læserne om, at det ikke er nødvendigt at dykke ned i de mange specialundersøgelser, da resultaterne heraf kun i stærkt begrænset omfang benyttes til løsning af den opgave, forfatteren i titlen på afhandlingen har sat sig.

En kritik må derimod fremsættes i anledning af, at forfatteren meddeler sine undersøgelsesresultater i skikkelse af grafiske fremstillinger uden at selve mat-

rialet til disse kurver publiceres. Gang på gang oplyses i fodnoter at selve tallene, den tabellariske oversigt, kun findes i manuskript.

Læserne henvises således til at aflæse kurverne, der er gengivet i lille målestok og i et ikke kvadreret koordinatsystem. En læser, der virkelig ønsker at gøre sig bekendt med resultaterne af forfatterens omfattende arbejde og forstå kommentarerne til disse resultater, må udstyre sig med passer og lineal og helst forstørrelsesglas. Temmelig hårde betingelser! Grafiske fremstillinger bør ikke erstattes, men kun tjene som illustration til tekst og tabeller.

*Chr. Gandil.*

*P. P. Sveistrup: Economic Principles of the Greenland Administration before 1947. Meddelelser om Grønland, Bd. 150, nr. 1. København 1949. 215 pages. Price: Kr. 18.50.*

»Economic Principles of the Greenland Administration before 1947« is the title of a book by P. P. Sveistrup, published a few years ago. The basis of these principles and their justification may well have been a major concern of Mr. Sveistrup in writing his book, but the subject he deals with is actually much broader. The resulting study combines a description of the Greenland economy, past and present, with a record of Danish official Greenland policies as well as official and unofficial thinking concerning these policies, and an economic analysis of basic factors determining the type of economy which prevails in Greenland plus the author's thoughts concerning the ways in which the social and economic welfare of Greenland's population can best be furthered. Mr. Sveistrup brings to his task an extensive knowledge of the economic history of Greenland, the analytic tools of economic thinking, and a deep concern for the welfare of the people of Greenland. The result is a book of absorbing interest, first and foremost to anyone interested in Greenland and its problems. To my knowledge, it is the only major piece of work dealing with the problems and basis of Greenland's economy

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and for this reason alone it might well be required reading for anyone concerned with these problems. But furthermore, it is an interesting example of how an economic analysis of an underdeveloped area may be tackled, a problem which has puzzled many in recent years. For in a relatively primitive economy, social, cultural and economic factors are so closely interwoven, in fact often identical—that economic analysis without constant reference to these other aspects of the situation is of little avail. Mr. Sveistrup, though an economist, is too well acquainted with the problems of Greenland to be tempted to one-sided economic analysis of his subject with neglect of social and historical factors.

Mr. Sveistrup's treatment of his subject may perhaps be summarized in the following manner: For more than a century the question has recurrently been raised: Should Greenland remain a closed economy, with the Danish Government acting as buffer between it and the outside world, or should free enterprise and free trading intercourse between Greenland and the outside world be permitted? History tells us that whenever the question has come up for serious debate the final conclusion has always been that the economy is too vulnerable and the population not mature enough to cope with the problems of a free economy, although this should be the ultimate goal. Not content with the dictum of the past Mr. Sveistrup proceeds to analyze the situation on the basis of available statistical data. His findings indicate that Greenland's economy is extremely vulnerable, since the products Greenland has to offer are of no consequence to the world market, (except in times of great shortages), while the things Greenland imports are of vital importance to that country. Furthermore, the prices of Greenland's export products are subject to extreme fluctuations—far greater than those of her import products. In times of economic depression Greenland's economy, considered as a whole, may well become submarginal. From the point of view of a free, competi-

tive economy it would not be possible to maintain trade with Greenland in such a situation. Since it would be out of the question to leave the Greenlanders to fend for themselves in a depression period, a Governmental economic buffer policy is necessary if the Greenlanders are to survive.

This fact established, Mr. Sveistrup considers whether it is possible for the Government buffer i. e. the Royal Greenland Trade to apply ordinary business principles in its trade relation with Greenland—specifically whether it is possible to make the various activities of the Royal Greenland Trade and the various commodities imported and exported, bear their share of the costs incurred. This, Mr. Sveistrup claims, is not possible. Using the device of considering the whole Greenland economy as an economic unit of which the Royal Greenland Trade is in charge he finds, on the basis of much statistical evidence, that most of the costs of the Greenland economy are in the nature of fixed costs, because they are necessary to satisfy the most basic needs of existence of the population. Consequently, the price policy of the Royal Greenland Trade in relation to Greenland must resemble that of industries with high fixed costs and be based on such principles as »what the traffic will bear«. In other words, the price policy becomes one which depends on decisions of the administration, after considering all relevant facts, including those of social welfare.

Thus, Mr. Sveistrup's conclusions do not support the theory that economic relations with Greenland can be based on the principles of a free economy. They amount to a justification of the basic principles applied before 1947, which he set out to analyze. That does not mean that he does not consider it possible to expand activities in Greenland beyond their former level and increase the standard of living of the population. But it is a basic tenet of Mr. Sveistrup that in trying to improve the standard of living of the Greenlanders one must not lose sight of the fact that the

economic geography of an area must be the basis of its economic and social structure. The greater the deviation between basis and superstructure, the greater the problems involved in making the population understand how the system functions and accept the limitations which always must exist in respect of what is economically and politically feasible. The greater also the cost to Denmark of keeping the economy functioning at the chosen level, a cost which Mr. Sveistrup warns will have to be borne also in less prosperous times.

Though one may disagree concerning details, Mr. Sveistrup's findings appear on the whole very well founded and difficult to dispute. If I should voice a criticism of Mr. Sveistrup's book, it would be directed towards the presentation of his ideas rather than the ideas themselves. There is an unfortunate lack of clarity of argumentation. Ideas and conclusions are not well pointed up. It is sometimes a laborious process to find out what is the real content and aim of a paragraph. Perhaps the fact that the book was written in Danish and translated into English accounts for some loss of pointedness. However, this criticism is minor in comparison with the contribution to knowledge and understanding of Greenland with which Mr. Sveistrup has presented us. But for this book there would be a great gap in the rich Danish scientific literature concerning Greenland.

Karen Friedmann.

*Léon Walras: Elements of Pure Economics, or the Theory of Social Wealth.* Translated by William Jaffé. George Allen and Unwin, London 1954. 620 sider. Pris: 42 sh.

Som første bind i en »Translation Series«, udgivet av The American Economic Association og the Royal Economic Society, foreligger nu William Jaffé's oversættelse av Walras. Denne klassiker er,

som oversætteren bemærker i forordet, »more often cited than read« — vel ikke mindst på grund av utilstrækkeligt kendskab til det sprog han skrev på; der er nu lejlighed for den engelsklæsende verden til at indhente det forsømte, og vi har samtidig fået en kommenteret standardudgave av Walras som vil blive stående. Den var så meget mere påkrævet, som Walras (der udtales med hørt s) nu synes at være mere aktuell end nogensinde, takket være input-output-analysens fremmarch.

Oversættelsen følger den definitive franske udgave, der udkom i 1926, 16 år efter forfatterens død. Til denne udgave med dens to appendix'er har oversætteren føjet et tredje appendix (om Wicksteed's »Coordination of the Laws of Production«), som Walras selv udelod i de to sidste udgaver av *Eléments*, men som stadig har doktrinhistorisk interesse. Jaffé har imidlertid ikke nøjedes med at oversætte Walras, men har forsynet bogen med en tekstkommentar (i noteform) på 60 tætttrykte sider, en oversigt over tilsvarende afsnit i samtlige 5 franske udgaver, et yderligere noteapparat der sammenholder teksten stykke for stykke i de successive udgaver så man kan følge udviklingen, et sagregister og et personindex. Alt dette forøger i høj grad værket's brugbarhed og letter oversigten. Det må ha været et hestearbejde, og udgiveren fortjener al mulig påskønnelse for at ha påtaget sig opgaven og løst den på den smukkeste måde. Der er ikke tvivl om at den gamle herre, i det intellektuelle Valhal hvor udgiveren holder av at forestille sig ham, føler sig »happy in the knowledge that a translation of his *Eléments* is appearing«.

Skulle man indvende noget, måtte det bl. a. være at forholdet til Leontief's input-output-analyse — der som nævnt har gjort Walras højaktuel — ikke er så udtømmende behandlet i kommentaren som man kunne ha ønsket. *Sven Danø.*