NEW MEXICO

An Appraisal
Introduction

For the newcomer, New Mexico is not only a land of enchantment, as the publicity insists, but also a land of many unknowns. The most immediate questions are mundane: what is education like, both in the elementary schools and in the colleges; what are the problems of delinquency and public health; what is the general economic situation; what are the problems of government; in short, what is the nature of daily, practical, economic, political, cultural living in the state.

As the newcomer settles in, he finds answers of various sorts to these initial questions, but then more sophisticated and more subtle ones present themselves. The issue of the state's constitution comes to his ears; he learns that the economy of the state is highly dependent on atomic industry; the papers report something of the state's complex, rich history. Perhaps most significantly, after he has been to a pueblo and seen an Indian dance or gone visiting to Bandelier National Monument, crossing the vast desert stretches and looping through green mountain passes, he begins to apprehend what is perhaps the essential mystery: the character of the state as embodied and combined in people, landscape, institutions, history.

This issue of the New Mexico Quarterly tries to answer some of these questions in what the editors believe is a rather special way. Soft, sentimental, publicity-oriented answers are easy to come by, and often fuzz over a question more than they clarify it. We wanted hard, realistic appraisals of the situations covered, appraisals that could lead to a sharper understanding and not just to glib conclusions. We wanted the objects under discussion illuminated in all their shadings, with no blinking or touching up of any rough or unpleasant spots. To this end, we asked experts in various areas to speak out plainly and candidly, to describe unsparingly the present situation, to consider the future in terms of real possibilities and not simply of well-meaning hopes.

The appraisals we offer here, then, should constitute a basis for discussion and evaluation of the various subjects that will be tied down to reality. Reality is a many-shaded thing, seldom simply black and white.
Thus the issue of the state constitution seems a clear one to Professor Dorothy I. Cline, who argues astutely that it should be revised, yet it seems equally clear to Professor Allan R. Richards that change matters little. We get two views of the state legislature, from Professor Charles B. Judah and from Mr. Jack E. Holmes, which by no means are identical, both of which are valid. Dean Chester C. Travelstead of the University of New Mexico College of Education differs clearly with his colleagues in this symposium on the desirability of earmarking tax funds for public education. The appraisals of agriculture, timber and mineral resources, the general discussions of education in the state, the analyses of the economic status, all offer similar modulations in emphasis, analysis, and conclusion, sometimes within the same article, sometimes between articles.

We have by no means covered every possible corner of the New Mexican panorama, nor are any of the articles to be considered definitive. The question of the legislature alone, for example, is worth a thick volume. We have ranged widely, but we think we have considered our subjects appropriately for a scanning appraisal. Certain subjects were not considered at all, either because of their complexity, or their exhaustive coverage over the years elsewhere, or, in one or two cases, simply because the persons invited were too busy at the moment. The monumental problem of water and the Southwest, for example, cannot properly be reduced to the compass of a short essay, which necessarily was our limitation. The matter of the Indians in the state is similarly intricate and complex and, in any case, has been treated at length. Some of the contributions are suggestive only, exploratory, as tentative as their subject matter—the provocative essay by Professor James S. Findley, for example, on the still unrealized possibilities for biological discoveries in the state, or the sober evaluation of the problems of city planning in the burgeoning municipalities by Mr. H. S. Coblentz. Other contributions, like the reports on anthropological research and progress in New Mexico, by Professors Florence Hawley Ellis and Frank C. Hibben, promise important news for the future.

Our hope, then, is simply that this issue of the Quarterly will help make New Mexico less of an unknown not only for the many newcomers in the state but for oldtimers as well.

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Guest Editor