

PALMER'S COMPANY GUIDE, 37th ed. by T. E. Cain. [1961. London, Stevens & Sons Ltd. pp. vii + 288 inc. index. 21/-.]

PALMER'S PRIVATE COMPANIES, 42nd ed. by T. E. Cain. [1961. London, Stevens & Sons Ltd. pp. viii + 128 inc. index. 15/-.]

These compact books, the first in its thirty-seventh edition and the second in its forty-second, are a pleasure to handle. The subject matter is well laid out and the style is terse. The aim of the books is to inform the reader on the general law affecting corporations and language is deployed economically to this purpose.

This attempt to cover the whole field of company law in two brief books naturally has its drawbacks but these are only likely to be felt by the advanced student and the practitioner and then only if it is forgotten that the object is only to provide a guide to company law. The layman and the student making his first survey of company law will more likely than not find the books thoroughly appealing.

However, the value of attenuated enunciation of the case-law on company law, even for beginners, may be questioned. Such involved topics as the rule in *Foss v. Harbottle* and the rule in *Royal British Bank v. Turquand* are disposed off in three and two and a half pages respectively, leaving one with a sense of futility over the attempt to compress case-law in the same manner as the much more amenable statutory law. Perhaps this difficulty is also the cause of the omission from these books of a statement on a company's liability in tort and in criminal law. Omission of some discussion on the corporate 'veil' and the 'organic theory' is more readily understandable.

Since the previous editions of these two books, new books on company law have come on the market, notably that by Professor Gower, and whereas prior to the appearances of these, the books reviewed here perhaps fulfilled a real need, certainly a wider need than to-day, their role is more difficult to assess in 1962. No doubt the reaction to the present editions will be a pointer to the editors whether a drastic change of form is not called for in future editions.

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