

ESSAYS ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE. Edited by S. Govindarajulu for the Indian Law Institute. [Bombay: Tripathi. xix + 188 pp. Rs. 15.00]

This collection of essays is based upon a working paper which was prepared for a seminar held at Hyderabad in the summer of 1961, the occasion for which was the centenary of the Indian Penal Code which came into force on 1st January, 1862.

The volume contains fifteen essays divided into four Parts. Two of the essays, in Part I, deal with the 'Historical Background'; ten, in Part II, are concerned with 'Some General Principles'; two, in Part III, treat 'Some Specific Offences' (homicide and sedition are the only two specific offences discussed), whilst in Part IV there is an essay dealing with 'Reform'.

The longest essay is one of thirty-two pages by Tapas Kumar Banerjee on the 'Substantive Criminal Law Prior to the Indian Penal Code'. The shortest is but half a page on 'Abetment', but several of the others are not much longer. Thus 'Complicity in Crime' is disposed of in a little over one page, whilst *mens rea* and conspiracy are dealt with in a little over six pages each.

It is from this fact that the essential weakness of the present volume springs. To have attempted to cover such a wide field in a mere one hundred and eighty-eight pages (particularly when nearly one quarter of the volume is devoted to historical material) has necessarily meant that many of the contributions are too slight to be of any real value, whilst even the more substantial contributions would have been improved by expansion.

In the Indian Penal Code and its interpretation by the Indian courts there is a mass of material that is of the greatest value to any criminal lawyer, but most of this material is completely unknown outside the borders of India. The present volume is a notable attempt to make this material more easily available, but it whets the appetite for more. We can only express the hope that the Indian Law Institute will consider a more ambitious and detailed volume of essays in the near future.