

PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW. By D. J. LATHAM BROWN. [London:
Sweet and Maxwell, 1970 xxx + 295 pp. (including index)].

This latest addition to the Concise College Texts series has a purportedly modest objective: "to convey in outline some notion of international law: what it is, how it came about, the way it works, its limitations and, though largely by implication, what may, and even more importantly what may not be expected of it."

By way of style and arrangement, it proves a refreshing treatment of the subject, the absence of numerous headings and lengthy footnotes making it conducive to being read as a continuous essay.

Notwithstanding its basic strength and modest objectives, there are a few criticisms which if noted and incorporated would enhance the value of this work. Most of these relate to recent developments and it is thought odd that a work published in March 1970 should omit any reference to them.

Thus the casual treatment of the highly debated subject of pollution is woefully inadequate. The ineffectiveness of the High Seas Convention in this respect necessitated the evolution of the International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties, 1969 (not yet in force). Even this Convention is felt to be inadequate as it provides for curative measures only. This inadequacy in turn precipitated Canada's enactment of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act of 1970 which empowers Canada to prevent ships using the Arctic if they are structurally inadequate. The heightened awareness of the problems revealed by the Torrey Canyon disaster and the various attempts made to deal with them surely merits mention even in a work which seeks to elucidate general principles. The absence of such treatment results in a failure to convey the dimension of dynamism that is evidenced in the development of international law today.

The modest objectives of this book have always been borne in mind. Any work which seeks to state general principles has inevitably to indulge in oversimplifications. But where such are misleading, details are necessary: the attempt to state the ways in which international law works cannot ignore recent trends if it is to convey a true perspective of the processes involved.

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