

GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE — A COMPARATIVE STUDY. By W. FRIEDMANN  
and J. F. GARNER. [Stevens and Sons. 1970]. £4.50 net.

Since the end of the First World War, the intensity of Government participation in business and industry has been on the increase; the book under review seeks to explain the legal framework in which this development is taking place. There are three parts, each comprising five chapters, covering different jurisdictions pertaining to government participation in business and industry, and emphasis throughout is on the comparative method; the book concludes with a critical analysis in Part Four. Part One deals with the United Kingdom, where under the various chapters the Editors have compiled relevant materials, by different authors on public corporations, describing the varieties of public corporations that exist in the United Kingdom, and explaining the legal and administrative machinery in so far as there is any common pattern. In comparison to public corporations, T. C. Daintith, examines the concept of "mixed enterprise". The chapter on "Ministerial control of the nationalised industries" by W. A. Robson, is seen against the background that the Government is usually in so influential a position "... that it can almost always influence a public enterprise to do what it wants whatever the legal text may say."

Parts Two and Three cover in a similar way countries like France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Israel and East Africa. Part Four contains an entire chapter on "Government enterprise: a comparative analysis", by W. Friedmann, which indicates, among other things, certain general conclusions of considerable theoretical and practical significance. Friedmann suggests that the sphere of Government responsibility should be vastly increased, "over the balance of town and country, and above all, over the use of water, earth and air—on an international as well as a national scale" in order to ensure "a condition of civilised survival."

One can see the contrasting modes of participation in business and industry employed by the various Governments mentioned, especially the United Kingdom on the one hand and Singapore on the other. Thus, while the more highly developed countries can perhaps afford to take nationalisation measures, which would deter any foreign investor, other countries cannot. The Industrial Expansion Act, 1968, of the United Kingdom, in particular, empowers the United Kingdom Government to purchase the undertaking (or a part of it) of any enterprise concerned. But, then, this is in marked contrast to Singapore's policy of attracting foreign investment, which, although conservative, represents an essential and practical approach for developing the economy.

The book should be of tremendous assistance to those interested in finding out the different patterns of Government participation in various enterprises.