HOW OUR LAWS ARE MADE, by DATUK JUSTICE HASHIM YEOP A. SANI, D.P.M.J.,J.M.N.,B.A.,Barrister-at-Law. [Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1974. xiv+77 pp.] $2.50.

In this slim volume the author, a one-time Parliamentary Draftsman of Malaysia, has set out in simple, readable form the manner in which laws take shape, are drafted and find themselves on the statute book.

In a short introduction Tan Sri Abdul Kadir bin Yusof, Attorney-General of Malaysia, observes that in his ten years' experience as Attorney-General "it is surprising to see the number of letters I have received requesting me to put up a new law or to amend an existing law on a subject which is entirely under the control or charge of another Ministry. Those people must have thought that since laws and regulations are drafted in the Attorney-General's Chambers, the Attorney-General must have made or has the power to initiate or make any law in Malaysia !" Whether Datuk Hashim's book will succeed in disabusing the layman of this quaint notion is a nice point. As the author observes at the commencement of the book, "To the layman, the Government makes all laws": and in a sense the Attorney-General personifies the legal character of government.

The author first defines the legislators, by reference to the Federal and State Constitutions and then, after a brief skirmish with the source of legislative authority (as set out in the Federal Constitution), explains the nature of and reasons justifying delegated legislation, and the basic procedure of law-making in the legislative chamber. At this point the work turns to the process of forming legislative policy (the first stage in the preparation of a Bill); the "creation of the legislative scheme" (second stage); and the "academic stage" (the third stage) of "composing the legal language". There then follows a chapter on the National Language Act 1967 (the text of which, as revised in 1971, is set out in an Appendix) which contains some useful information for the legal historian, *e.g.,* that laws enacted prior to 1st September 1967 were in English. Further, in the case of laws which are "technical in nature" one notes that it has been the practice, since 1967, to prescribe that the authoritative text should be the English text.

The rest of the book deals with a problems of the legal draftsman and the noting of some basic guidelines for young draftsmen. The advice here given is practical and sound. In the Appendices are included (in addition to the revised text of the National Language Act 1967) examples of a Bill, an Act of Parliament and subsidiary legislation.

In all, the book lifts, just a little, the curtain that hides the activities of the draftsman from a curious (or sometimes curiously incurious) world. Gone are the days — or so I hope ! — when a speaker on the opposition benches of the Dewan Ra'ayat could affirm of a Bill to which he took objection, "I know who's responsible for this," pointing to the draftsman, shivering in his shoes behind the ministerial benches, "him !" The draftsman is but the technician who translates the policies of government into a form in which the administration and the courts can, hopefully, give useful effect to those policies. To dispel some of the mystique that surrounds the subject can do nothing but good, and Datuk Hashim is to be commended for the effort. Now that he is freed from the pressures of legislative drafting, the reviewer can only hope that he will find time to lift the curtain further, and to salt his narrative with a few choice anecdotes. In his comments on the legislative scheme of a Bill he refers, all too briefly, to reliance on Taiwanese agricultural practice in the preparation of what became the Farmers' Association Act of 1967. More of such anecdotes would certainly be of value to the legal and political historian, especially now that the old British system of legal reports on legislation has gone, forever.

But, in short, an admirable little book, and in these days of inflation very good value indeed.

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