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David: The Economics of Air Mail Transportation

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BOOK REVIEWS

Department Editor.....FRANK E. QUINDRY

THE ECONOMICS OF AIR MAIL TRANSPORTATION. By Paul T. David. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1934. Pp. xxi, 235.

Guiding the reader through the formative periods of air mail carriage in the United States up until shortly after the recent contract cancellations, the author presents in the first half of his book a very interesting historical survey which is used as a basis for the consideration of present services and rates.

The writer views the situation from the standpoint of the Post Office Department although he attempts to consider the carriers fairly. Consequently in discussing rates he gives primary attention to the needs of the Government and only passing consideration to the costs of operation and other factors involved in carrying mail. As he points out, however, information regarding such costs was not available. Perhaps the present investigation by the Interstate Commerce Commission will make that information available to some extent. A revision based upon knowledge of operating costs would make the book extremely valuable. In saying this, however, there is no intention of discrediting it in its present form.

The author's recommendations for a future governmental policy coincide rather closely with the provisions relating to rates in new air mail law.

This is an excellent treatise on the subject and is highly recommended as an aid to research and as interesting reading matter.

FRANK E. QUINDRY.