



SOME MICHIGAN BOOKS

YANKEE FROM THE WEST

SENATOR BURTON K. WHEELER, born on February 27, 1882, at Hudson—twenty-three miles west of Boston—Massachusetts, and graduated from Michigan's Law School in 1905, began his career in law and politics in Butte, Montana. He was a member of the Montana legislature, 1911-1912, and was then appointed U.S. District Attorney (Montana) in 1913 as a reward for helping to elect Thomas J. Walsh to the U.S. Senate. He resigned his Federal appointment in 1918 "in order to satisfy the friends of T. J. Walsh who believed my retention in office would mean his defeat as a candidate to succeed himself in the Senate." Defeated for Governor of Montana in 1920 but elected to the U.S. Senate in 1922, he was defeated for Vice-President of the U.S. on the Independent Progressive Ticket of 1924 along with Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin. After serving in the U.S. Senate for twenty-four years as the original of that group known as the sons of a wild jackass, he was defeated for re-election in 1946. He then entered private practice in Washington, D.C.

Yankee from the West is the story of the highlights of Senator Wheeler's career in law and politics. And it is easy to see why he was one of the most controversial lawyer-politicians in the first half of the twentieth century. From the beginning he fought for the underdog, but this book does not tell the reader why. It does, however, provide many hitherto unrevealed shocking and amusing facts concerning major events in American history, as well as some startling facets of leading personalities.

Instead of fighting the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, called "the Company" in Montana, the recent Michigan graduate would have made it much easier for all concerned had he accepted one of the Company's many offers for peace and prosperity. But he did fight the Company; and he was opposed to policies which eventually involved the U.S. in both World Wars; and he did refuse to let war hysteria affect his prosecution of cases as U.S.

District Attorney in Montana; and he does show how the Montana espionage act became the model through Senator Walsh's influence for the sedition amendment of May, 1918, of the Federal espionage law. All this, too, without one word of criticism of President Woodrow Wilson's attitude toward mob violence during the war years!

Despite its authentic ring, *Yankee from the West* is an almost unbelievable story of an almost incredible lawyer. Few readers will believe, probably, it was anything but plain cussedness which drove Senator Wheeler to attack Harry M. Daugherty, another Michigan law graduate, author of the smoke-filled-room drama in the Blackstone Hotel, and boss of the Ohio gang as well as Attorney-General of the U.S. And when he had every reason not to, he nevertheless led the fight against the 1937 Supreme Court bill. Incidentally, both the Daugherty and Supreme Court stories are exceptionally well told. This is especially true of the circumstances through which the letter of Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes stopped the Roosevelt administration in its tracks. Perhaps most revealing of all, however, is the telling of the long fight a few Progressives made against the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act of 1920 and for the Wheeler-Rayburn Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 with its "death sentence" clause. Curiously, he does not clinch his story by showing how successful the Public Utility Act was. By 1952, holding companies had divested themselves from 753 affiliates with assets of over ten billions of dollars of mostly "watered stock."

WILLIAM R. LESLIE

Yankee from the West. By Burton K. Wheeler, LL.B. '05, with Paul F. Healy. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962. Pp. 436. \$5.95.

WORLD TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DESTINY

THIS IS A provocative book. It provokes serious reflection on the views expressed by such well-known men as George Kennan,