

Here is a privately owned, tax-paying organization which has constructed a series of twenty-one reservoirs on the Wisconsin River." The improvement is "subject to regulation, pays full local, state and federal taxes, and provides for a six percent return on investments." As for irrigation, "over three-quarters of the irrigation in the West and all of the irrigation in the East has been provided by private enterprise."

Thus the clichés fall like trees in a hurricane in Admiral Moreell's pages. The biggest cliché to bite

the dust is the one about the unconscionable private power lobby which is supposed to be mulcting the citizens of hard-earned cash. Ben Moreell brings out the statistic that the cost of power to the average U.S. householder is about 1 per cent of his family budget as against 29 per cent for food and 2 per cent for tobacco. A reduction of 3 per cent in the citizen's tax bill would pay for all of his power! . . .

Reprints of this review available: 10 copies for \$1.00

### **The Vision and the Constant Star**

By *A. H. Hobbs*. New York: The Long House, Inc. 192 pp. \$3.50

In all times, and no matter what the dominant pattern of thought may be, there are some who find fault with things as are, who cannot conform. They are for change. Their objection to the prevailing rigidity may be well thought out, thoroughly rationalistic, following logically from basic premises; but the fact is that the premises themselves are lodged in temperament. They reason as they do because they cannot reason otherwise. Thus, a half-century ago, the socialists presented a fool-proof case — if one accepted their pre-

ises — against the individualistic pattern of thought that was then in the ascendancy, and in favor of their collectivistic doctrine.

Now that socialism is the going rigidity, there is a growing number of objectors, those who insist on pointing out the inadequacies of this pattern of thought and want something else. They cannot conform. Though there are differences among them as to details of the pattern of thought they prefer, the trend of their thinking is toward values which once prevailed and which to these objectors seem more salutary than the collectivistic doctrines and practices of the times. They call themselves, or are called, conservatives.

Prominent among these noncon-

formists—prominent both for his erudition and his lucidity of expression—is Professor A. H. Hobbs, whose forthrightness has brought upon him the retribution always meted out to nonconformists. Yet he speaks on. In his new book, *The Vision and the Constant Star*, his intrepidity is matched by an irresistible cogency—irresistible if you are inclined to his premise, namely, that the individual is a moral being, not a mechanical product of his environment. He presents his case beautifully.

The vision that impelled the Founding Fathers to reject the British Crown and to institute an untried form of government, the vision that is before us all our days, the vision that even the collectivists entertain is the happy and fruitful life. But, is it attainable through the substitution of mechanical and materialistic devices for individual responsibility? Can life be bettered by political compulsions or by the compulsions of personal integrity? And, historically, did not man come closer to his goal when he accepted the prescription of moral absolutes—the constant star? These are questions that Dr. Hobbs touches upon, bringing into focus the failure of economic determinism, “progressive” education, sociological dicta based on biased polls, and other

facets of the modern collectivistic thought-pattern, to improve human existence.

It is an informative as well as a provocative book. To those who find the climate of our times uncomfortable, the reading of it will at least improve their understanding of the causes of this climate.

FRANK CHODOROV

 **Our Philosophical Traditions:  
A Brief History of Philosophy  
in Western Civilization**

By *Sterling Lamprecht*. New York:  
Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc.  
523 pp. \$5.50.

This is a careful survey of the ideas of the famous philosophers from the sixth century B.C. to John Dewey.

No doubt Professor Lamprecht has built up his book over many years of study in connection with his Amherst College course on the history of philosophy. The book is in some respects the best available textbook for such a course. It is equally good for anyone who would like to have on hand an account of the conclusions of those who have thought most deeply on our intellectual problems.

Lamprecht's book is, in effect, a succession of intellectual biographies. A varying number of pages is devoted to expounding the thought of every renowned thinker, and the less renowned are given