Reviewed by Ralph E. Jennings
Curtis E. Ramey
M. Raymond


The Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration of the House of Representatives has devoted considerable effort to publication of a "Survey of Space Law." The clarity of discussion is commendable in view of the complexity of the subject. This survey presents a strong argument to the pragmatists who take the position that promulgation of a Space code should follow the actual occurrence of de facto regulatory problems. Unless we reverse the traditional concepts of law evolving with life and dealing with problems after they have arisen, it is quite likely that we shall be faced with "the giddy cycle of law chasing power and never quite catching up," a possibly fatal position to occupy in Outer Space. It seems to this reviewer that necessity dictates our having a considerable body of Space law thinking available at the time power to regulate and enforce becomes a reality. The Darwinian concepts of "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" are not wholly inapposite here. The survey treats both ancient and relatively new legal doctrines which might possibly have some utility in guiding present-day thinking on Space law, i.e. "cuius est solum, eius est usque ad coelum" (he who owns the land owns it up to the sky), Mare Liberum (Law of the Sea), Res Ipsa Loquitur (The thing speaks for itself), etc. The survey also discusses the doctrine of "sovereignty" with its many ramifications. The concepts are admittedly "grappling posts" for some framework of reference and may have little or no place in effective Space law codes but must be presently resorted to because of our limited knowledge of conditions to be encountered in Outer Space.

It is refreshing and somewhat comforting to see that we and our Congress somehow appreciate the magnitude of the problems we shall eventually face in Outer Space and are devoting intensive thought to anticipating and compromising the expected problems. It seems terribly important that we do so. For if we merely project present international conflicts upon the larger screen of the cosmos, the human family will undoubtedly face its gravest danger since the dawn of creation. This reviewer heartily recommends the serious reading of this survey by all people but especially by scientists, lawyers and statesmen.

-Curtis E. Ramey


Certainly one of the most attractive features of this book is its price. In this age of high publishing costs, it is rare indeed to find a worthwhile book for $3.00. And it is even more rare when the book is as worthwhile as this one.

Price notwithstanding, the best feature of the book is the evident sincerity and objectivity with which the author wrote it. He believes—most convincingly—that life does exist on Mars. And it is hard to refute him, for he defines life in the most exacting and scientific terms. Life, for the author, is rather a deterministic bio-chemical complex. If the reader is willing to accept this view, then the rest of the book follows a neat and logical
order. In other words, the difference between man, moss, and microbe is quantitative rather than qualitative. Thus the lowest lichen clinging to a rock is as alive as the man who crushes it under foot as he walks. So, too, the microscopic germ that in the end falls man.

Much of this informative book is given over to the ecological aspects of life on Mars. For this reason the first four chapters will be especially interesting to those readers of SPACE Journal who were stimulated by John Hulley's widely acclaimed article "The Purpose of Man in the Universe" (Summer, 1958). Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the chapter titled "What Is Life?"

But the real value of this book lies in the fact that it sums up what is known about Mars in a language which the average or general reader can understand. Recondite (Dealing with what is abstruse; characterized by profound scholarship.) words and terms are always defined for the nontechnical and nonprofessional reader. —M. Raymond

The third edition of Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia is a superb reference book. Covering everything from aeronautics and astronomy to statistics and zoology, this handsome one volume edition contains over 200,000 words, 100,000 definitions, 14,000 separate articles, and 1400 illustrations. Twelve pages are in full color. Never was it more important to have available for fingertip use a single volume that offers a reliable, understandable guide to science in the Space Age. This new edition, bringing together between one set of covers the equivalent of a multi-volume science library, is a book to be kept on the shelf with the few basic volumes that are used everywhere for essential day-to-day reference. The world of modern science has in the past decade progressed swiftly across hitherto impassable barriers. It has penetrated every phase of life. It is impossible for the layman (or scientist, for that matter) to keep abreast of developments in all fields. This encyclopedia would be an exceptionally valuable addition to anyone's library. —Ralph E. Jennings

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