

## **Introduction**

**T**HE 1954 edition of the Wisconsin Blue Book marks the one hundred and first year of publication. Issued on an annual basis from 1853 to 1884, it has since appeared biennially.

The differences between the volume of 1853 and the 1954 edition reflect in a measure the vast expansion in state government activity in the past century. The physical characteristics of the book improved in that period of time as the nature of the printing process changed. More important, however, the content of the successive issues of the book reflects the transition from the fledgling state with great potentiality and few accomplishments to the firmly established agency of government recognized for its leadership in many fields.

In 1853 it took slightly more than 100 pages to describe what was considered the essentials of Wisconsin state government. Today, after omitting many of the items included in 1853 which are now published elsewhere, it is difficult to provide a reasonably comprehensive picture of the essential activities in 800 pages.

It is interesting to note, for example, in this period when financing state government is a critical problem, that in 1853 the chief executive of the state was paid \$1,250 and the highest paid state officer was the Bank Comptroller, a position no longer provided, who got \$2,000 as did the three Supreme Court Justices who were selected for the first time in that year.

Although the material between the covers of the Blue Book has changed drastically in the past 100 years, the objective of the volume to supply impartial and accurate information about the state to the citizens of Wisconsin in general and the youth of the state in particular has remained constant.

*The editors are indebted to the legislative, administrative and judicial officers of the state and the many state agencies for their cooperation in supplying the information required to prepare the bulk of this volume and to the staffs of the printing division of the Bureau of Purchases, the Photographic Laboratory of the University of Wisconsin, and the Legislative Reference Library of the Free Library Commission for their aid in preparing the copy for this book, and to the L. L. Cook Co. of Milwaukee for the photograph of the Executive Mansion used as the frontispiece. Most of the editorial work in this volume has been done by the librarian of the Legislative Reference Library.*

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