

Foreword

AS the 1960 Blue Book comes off the press an army of workers are gathering and compiling data which gives great promise of showing that Wisconsin has reached 4 million residents who in a very real sense are the government of our state, our counties, our cities and villages, our towns and our many special districts which constitute a total of more than 5,200 separate units of government.

We, the people, organized as the state, county and local units of government spend more than a billion dollars a year to conduct the business of this great system of public organization. We employ over 100,000 people. We own vast amounts of land, improvements and personal property. We touch upon the lives of our people from their prenatal days until their lives are but a memory. We aid, advise, restrain and even punish our people.

It is axiomatic that our stake in this tremendous organization requires that we develop and maintain an interest in its operation. For every right or privilege which we enjoy under a democracy, there is a corresponding duty. This duty is often expressed in such tangible functions as voting, paying taxes, obeying laws, serving in the armed forces and accepting public office. It is, however, also our duty to be informed, to make the effort to understand what the functions of our public agencies are and how these functions are being carried out. It is our duty to make an effort to comprehend the operation of the public business in order that we may support that which is proper and reform that which is not.

It is also the duty of those who have been selected to operate this vast public machinery to inform their stockholders — the citizens of our state — of their activities in the past

and their plans for the future. Tremendous improvements in the media of communication in the past few decades have increased the opportunity to provide such information, but the ever-increasing complexity of government has made it increasingly difficult to convey the story of public business to the expanding population in a meaningful way.

The Wisconsin Blue Book is one of the oldest continuous devices to keep the people informed about the activities of one segment of our government, the state. Conservative in format, it has consistently provided accurate data on the basic organizational pattern and operations of the state. Distributed almost entirely without charge, it is not only available to schools and libraries, but many individuals possess copies. We commend it to you as a reliable source of information about the most broadly-owned business in Wisconsin — your state government.

GAYLORD A. NELSON,

Governor