To bring nontariff barriers into international negotiations, the level and extent of protection and distortion created by these devices need to be identified and documented. This work is a step in that direction to the extent that it chronologizes the evolution and describes the characteristics of nontariff restrictions in agricultural trade. However, no new analytical or empirical avenues to measuring the level of protection or the consequences of specific nontariff barriers upon consumer welfare and production and marketing efficiency are developed. Consequently, those looking for a rigorous analytical treatment of the subject will be disappointed. However, it is unfair to criticize the study on this basis. It still performs the useful function of inventorying and describing restrictive agricultural trade instruments and articulates the importance of the subject in such a forceful manner that it may well stimulate other investigators to plow the subject matter further.

James R. Jones
University of Idaho


James Hite provides a comprehensive survey of land-use policy in the United States. The approach is that of institutional analysis. The focus is land-use policy in urban areas. The treatment is broad; Hite introduces the historical, ideological, political, and economic aspects of public policies affecting the use of land. Chapters also are devoted to expenditure and revenue policies as these affect land use, and the author considers implications for planning posed by levels of and changes in information, knowledge, and technology.

Citizens interested in and concerned about land-use policy in this country are the intended audience for this book. The author does an excellent job of organizing and presenting diverse and complicated materials for this audience. Theory and concepts that might seem dry in another context are blended with history, quotes, examples, and current issues to form a rich and palatable blend.

Room and Situation also would serve well as the principal text in an undergraduate course with a multi-disciplinary approach to land use. Within each discipline, individuals can find points of contention and will not learn a great deal more about land use as approached within their discipline. But perspectives also may be broadened significantly by exposure to approaches outside their own discipline.

Planners may find Room and Situation both interesting and provocative. Such professionals would not learn new approaches to planning. Rather, Hite’s analysis of the political roles and political tactics of planners might be of interest to such an audience. This analysis strips away certain mystiques surrounding planning and planners. Hence, professional planners may find the work provocative.

The incorporation of political analysis in the approach to studying land-use policy is a major strength and distinguishing characteristic of Room and Situation. Political analysis is used in two ways. Models and concepts from political science are applied to foster understanding of the current situation; that is, to explain the types of land-use policies we have and those that we do not have. Concepts of politics also are brought to bear on the often overlooked task of analyzing how particular abstract proposals might actually evolve if made subjects of public policy. The concepts and models from political science are diverse, drawing from one thread or another as appropriate to the subject being considered. The public choice approach is given considerable emphasis in a concluding chapter.

Analysis of the roles of information and knowledge in land-use policy and land-use politics is another strong point of this text. The author notes problems created by both the paucity and abundance of information and knowledge in areas related to land use. Also analyzed are the ways in which control of information is both a source of power and a factor that must be considered in understanding the shape and direction of land-use policy.

Although the book strongly emphasizes the description and understanding of land-use policy, the author does consider some prescriptions for problems identified in the analysis. Among other prescriptions, the author gives most attention to the need to make information about land use widely available at low cost in order to allow citizens to participate in the formulation of land-use policy. The author describes how such an information system might be developed and reports on recent experiments with such systems. Here, the author fal ters in his otherwise superb application of political concepts to the understanding of public policy. When providing goods, a political system seeks information not only on what individuals want, but how badly they want it. One way in which the latter type of information is conveyed is through log rolling. That process is superbly developed by the author. Another way in which a political system measures how badly people want something is by making participation costly. Just as for private goods, intensity of preferences or demand is measured—albeit crudely—by how much people are willing to pay. Hite’s proposal would significantly subsidize major costs of political participation. The author does not consider implications of his prescription for efficient allocation of publicly provided goods and for the needs of decision makers for information on salience needed to retain political support. Subsidization of the costs of participation may be defended on egalitarian principles. Perhaps the author would judge that such benefits outweigh disadvantages. But we do not know
because the political functions of costly participation are not considered by the author.

Such lapses are to be expected in a book with such a broad scope. The text remains an excellent introduction to land-use policy for citizens and students seeking a broad, highly readable, and carefully developed understanding of urban land-use policy in the United States.

W. Bruce Shepard
Department of Political Science
Oregon State University


This little book consists of an introduction, three chapters, and an appendix. On casual inspection a methodological treatise on knowledge and ignorance in economics might not appear to be of great relevance to agricultural economists. But a thoughtful reading will benefit almost any applied economist, although it must be emphasized the book will be of value only if it is read with reflection and introspection with respect to one's own thought processes. It will not yield dividends to the person who is seeking a "quick fix" methodology of economics.

Many of us as agricultural economists have committed the errors that Hutchinson warns about and it is, therefore, most appropriate that it be reviewed in this Journal. The prospective reader should be aware that some passages will be meaningful only if the reader is familiar or is willing to become familiar with some of the recent literature on the methodology of science. The remainder of the book will be accessible to anyone having familiarity with theoretical and applied economic literature.

The introduction argues that the most dangerous kind of ignorance is that regarding the limits and limitations of one's knowledge. The author believes that ignorance of this kind on the part of economists will result in their causing noneconomists to have excessive expectations regarding the value of economic studies. The consequence is "disappointment and disillusionment" (p. 5) by those who have been led to believe economics can deliver more than it is capable of delivering. The introduction ends with some thoughts on graduate training and an approving quote from Jacob Viner to the effect that good teachers at the college level will never come from those who have been trained to think only within the limits of one subject or from the point of view of one subject.

Chapter two deals with prediction. Hutchinson accepts the notion that a principal aim of economics is to improve prediction; and that it is, to some limited extent, a feasible aim. As one might expect, the author moves quickly to deal with the methodology of science which has become associated with Sir Karl Popper. It is, of course, Popper's belief that the criterion for judging a science is its predictability, its capacity to "forbid" something from happening. Only in this way can conjectures be made that are capable of refutation. Hutchinson contrasts Popper's position to the argument advanced by Theil, which seems to concede that "scientific" prediction in economics and econometrics is not possible. The author takes a position intermediate between that of Popper and Theil. He believes that most predictions in economics are extrapolations of trends or deductions based on trends. Even though such a procedure has obvious weaknesses, Hutchinson believes that economists have no alternative. He argues, but does not document, that quite naive extrapolation in some cases has been shown to be superior to more elaborate deductive model building. The conclusion is reached that attempts to make economics "scientific" by reliance on mathematical model building is a methodological "dry hole" because any prediction must be based on trends, and trends will never provide the necessary completeness for a theory which will have the capacity to "forbid" events. This methodological discussion is followed by a discourse on whether predictions in economics are improving or not. Without attempting to summarize all of this discussion, one factor working to improve prediction is the availability of more accurate and current statistics; a factor working in the opposite direction is the increased complexity of modern economies.

Chapter three on the history and philosophy of science and economics permits the author to relate the viewpoints of Kuhn and other recent writers on the philosophy of science to those of Popper. Hutchinson speaks approvingly of attempts to understand the history of science. He warns, however, that there is danger that normative-positive confusion can develop easily, as it did with many in their interpretation of Kuhn. He also warns that different sciences have different histories, and this must be expected since they have different materials with which they must work. He says the labels "mature" and "immature" sciences are misleading because they lead to expectations that eventually the "immature" sciences will be comparable to the "mature" sciences. (Kenneth E. Boulding believes that "secure" and "insecure" would be better adjectives. See "Science, Our Common Heritage," Science 22 February 1980, volume 207, no. 4433.) He does not believe that economics can ever be like physics, but he does believe the rigor developed by the philosophers of science in advancing what constitutes "good" scientific procedure can be used in economics to prevent economists from becoming excessively dogmatic in the advice they extend to policy makers. Hutchinson presents examples of policy advice by economists where the methodological limits of economics have either been ignored or improperly observed.

Chapter four is concerned with the crisis of abstraction in economics. Hutchinson thinks the