and the variety of public broadcasting but, he insists, its first and guiding principle is — and must remain — the "public interest."

There is a way of talking sensibly about the public interest (see, for example, Brian Barry's Political Argument) but, I believe, the dominant message which is conveyed by contemporary theorizing about the idea is that it should be avoided as long as possible. If you can attach an "interest" to particular individuals, do so. Only attribute an interest to the public when it is impossible to distinguish beneficiaries from the great mass of mankind. This bias for specification encourages a series of sensible validating questions: Do the supposed beneficiaries really care? Are they willing to pay for what they get? Would they pay if they had the money or if there was a market in which consumers and providers could trade?

Blakely avoids both the philosophical complexities of the concept of a "public interest" and the caution that it should be used sparingly. As a result, both in his history and in his perspective on the future, he fails to recognize the way in which claims for certain forms of broadcasting as merit goods have been shaped by the lack of an effective market. If people could pay for radio and television programs in the way they do for print — if broadcasting programs were not public goods — then there would be only a narrow range of issues in which the public interest would have to be mobilized. Blakely quotes an insightful comment by Ronald Coase but for the most part he ignores the way in which the technology of the market has structured his own life and those of his colleagues. If there were no free-riders, this would be a very different history.

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This is an exceptional volume in Greenwood's series and reads like the definitive work on the subject. Richard Saunders uses well government sources and the special economic literature on railroads. All phases of the study are investigated carefully and painstakingly.
The book is a tightly worded narrative which puts particular people and facilities in their proper places and in definite perspective, and the story is seldom dull. Saunders emerges as one of the foremost authorities on American railroading.

It begins in all its financial complexity in the formation of the Northern Securities Company, held to be in restraint of trade by the Supreme Court in 1904 and ordered to dissolve. The Interstate Commerce Commission's emergence as a serious regulatory force required that its role in the formation of mergers be recognized. Other interests demanding a voice were the brotherhoods, whose members' jobs were at stake and who demanded compensation, local communities and industries whose very lives were on the line, competing carriers, and the ever-present speculators who maneuvered to sell stock at the highest possible price.

Railroad mergers demanded consideration of the public interest to insure competitive rail service and adequately supervised connections. After World War I, Glenn Plumb, a railroad attorney, proposed government ownership of railroads and called for a reordering into unified systems. The Transportation Act of 1920 returned the lines to their owners but required mergers approved by the ICC to promote the public interest. Government vigilance slackened so that the Transportation Act of 1940 merely stated that mergers do not damage the public interest. The unusual volume of traffic required by the war effort disguised the sick condition of the industry emerging in 1945 with handsome profits. From the mid-forties to the mid-fifties, the trucking industry made noticeable inroads on freight traffic and had become a genuine competitor. The railroads' general failure to make improvements in service and technology increased their headaches.

Mergers were considered panaceas as early as 1954, and they ended with the collapse of Penn Central in 1970. New York Central's Robert Young had been an early proponent, and the idea identified him with railroad statesmanship. Unfortunately, the ICC permitted too many mergers without adequate investigation as to their possible effects. Penn Central's failure ultimately led to the formation of the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) under the authority of the Rail Reorganization Act of 1973. Conrail took over the bankrupts and urged the survivors to put together viable systems, giving all of the passenger traffic to Amtrak. It is probably too early to determine Conrail's role, but I was still disappointed to find so little treatment of the agency's work. This represents a major weakness in the book, but it is not a serious one.
The thirty-two maps are highly useful and make the written narrative clearer and more understandable. Saunders skillfully imparts the special character belonging to certain lines, so that the Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Seaboard Lines, Delaware and Lackawanna, Chicago and Eastern, and the Burlington Northern stand out as more than abstractions. The author's description of the run from Buffalo to New York of Lackawanna's crack liner Phoebe Snow is graphic and stirs nostalgia, highlighting both its service and place in the social and economic life of the people in that area. The price of the book is steep, but considering inflation and Saunders's excellent scholarship, it is not too far out of line.

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In answer to the growing interest in bottle collecting in the late 1960s and 1970s, Helen McKearin set out to produce a general reference on the subject. As author of Bottles, Flasks, and Dr. Dyott and coauthor with her father of the well-known and authoritative volumes American Glass and Two Hundred Years of American Blown Glass, no one was better qualified to write American Bottles and Flasks and Their Ancestry. Because of McKearin's ill health and declining vision, Kenneth M. Wilson was added to the project. Wilson's background includes a ten-year association with the Corning Museum of Glass, his present position as director of Collections and Preservation at the Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, and a text entitled New England Glass and Glassmaking.

The book opens with "Notes for the Curious," which includes such things as the etymology of bottle terms and the development of glass compositions. The section on "Historical Background" begins with the first bottle blowers of the first century, B. C. The evolution of glassblowing is then briefly followed to the beginning of the bottle industry in America. After general comments, seventy-nine "Glasshouse Sketches" are provided. Included among these are nineteen Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania firms. These concise essays