

such facts as that this is an international city, suitable for international organizations, a claim no other American city can make. Those now-you-see-them, now-you-don't "documented advantages to industrial prospects" that Fantus has belatedly discovered have still to be spelled out. The kind of objective study required must surely be available in this unique center of research and communication.

Fantusmagoria

Purveyors of surveys are the soothsayers of corporate life; almost any subject and any conclusion can be ordered up for a price. Like Lindsay Rogers's definition of polling, they are a means of being precise and authoritative about matters of which everyone remains essentially ignorant.

Corporate moves from New York are traditionally buttressed by surveys proving that the city is the worst of all possible worlds. This conclusion was reached by a Fantus Company report last year for restive corporations, in which New York emerged as a place virtually without redeeming feature. Every fault was projected on an increasing line of disaster to 1985. Some of the aspects of the report were true, some were gratuitously and almost viciously unfavorable, and others were just silly. The same company also offered to help the same corporations leave New York with studies of alternative areas.

Meanwhile, the respected urbanologist William H. Whyte was making his own survey of corporate relocation. He has found that an impressive number of corporate moves have been made close to the boss's home or golf club. So much for salable research mythology.

Now the Fantus Corporation proposes to make a survey for a group of foundations formed to help New York in its economic development plans. This survey will document "the economic advantages of New York City" for "selected target companies." Perhaps the same companies that were unsold on New York in the first place? And where were those economic advantages before?

It would seem that if the recommendations of Fantus Report No. 2 are applied to remedy the dismal conclusions of Fantus Report No. 1, those 1985 projections can be canceled out; and if all can be achieved that is promised for Report No. 2 (in ten months, for \$185,000), then one can only conclude that the purchasers of Report No. 1 have had a bad deal.

This does not mean that New York is not in need of some serious analysis of its assets and advantages. What it does not need is reversible surveys or statistical sleight-of-hand.

It needs, even more, the kind of promotional campaign for business that other cities mount so well, emphasizing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.