

BOOK REVIEWS

THE OPERATION OF THE INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM, AND RECALL IN OREGON. By James D. Barnett, Ph. D., Professor of Political Science in the University of Oregon. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915. Pp. 295. \$2.00.)

This book, as its title indicates, is a practical rather than theoretical study. It has an appendix containing the bibliography of the "Oregon system," constitutional and statutory provisions relating to the initiative, referendum and recall, a list of all measures submitted to the people and the votes for and against, from 1904 to 1914, and also sample material from various sources illustrative of the method of conducting a campaign for or against a referendum measure.

"Beginning with 1892," Professor Barnett tells us, "a campaign for the adoption of the initiative and referendum was carried on with tireless effort, under the remarkable leadership of W. S. U'Ren, aided by the Joint Committee on Direct Legislation, later broadened into the Direct Legislation League (the forerunner of the People's Power League), with the result that after ten years the system was embodied in the constitution. Advocated by the granges, the labor unions, and the Populist party, it had finally been indorsed both by the Republican and Democratic parties."

The book is not argumentative. The author's purpose in writing it was to present and interpret the facts. Professor Barnett has brought together in this volume and made accessible much interesting and valuable information concerning the merits and defects of the "Oregon system."

Concerning the complaint so often made that initiative measures have been crudely drawn, he says that "although there has been at times good ground for such complaint, on the whole the measures submitted through the initiative compare well in form with the legislation enacted by the assembly."

The circulation of petitions has been a real problem. In a few instances petitions "have been circulated wholly by volunteers interested in the good of the cause involved." But in most cases even when measures were proposed and supported by strong organizations such as the People's Power League, the State Grange, or the State Federation of Labor, it was necessary to resort to paid circulators to secure

the required number of names. To the suggestion that giving or receiving money for circulating petitions should be made a criminal offense, the author replies that "it seems that the prohibition would result in hampering those acting in good faith without preventing the unscrupulous from acting in violation of the law. Great business interests, acting through their armies of employees, could probably easily evade the provision. There is a great deal of opinion to the effect that the provision would practically destroy the legitimate use of the initiative and referendum, especially in view of the fact that heretofore many measures, clearly favored by the people, could not have been placed on the ballot without the aid of paid circulators."

Professor Barnett seems to think, however, that the circulation of petitions is not a necessary feature of the initiative and referendum. It might be a better plan to have petitions signed only at registration offices. But this change would make it necessary to reduce the required percentage of signers. To prohibit the circulation of petitions without reducing the required percentage would in his opinion probably render the initiative and referendum inoperative.

The over-use of the initiative and referendum he attributed to a number of causes, such as the desire of the people to use a new tool, the failure of the legislature to enact needed legislation, the ease of securing signatures and the resubmission of defeated measures.

The large number of measures appearing on the ballot makes it extremely difficult to cast an intelligent vote. "It is no reflection upon the intelligence of the voters to say that it is absolutely impossible for them adequately to consider such masses of legislative proposals." Nevertheless, the educational effect of the system, Professor Barnett thinks, is of great value.

There is some check on the over-use of the referendum in the disposition of many voters to vote against measures which they do not understand. The experience of Oregon shows that as the number of measures on the ballot increases, the proportion defeated is also likely to increase. Measures of a technical nature and consequently difficult for the public to understand, local measures which do not interest the state at large, and those backed by narrow selfish interests are likely to be rejected at the polls.

"In spite of the difficulties in the situation," the author says, "the results of the several elections are, in general, competent evidence as to the intelligence of the vote cast. That the voters have done remarkably well under the circumstances is generally conceded, even by the opponents of direct legislation.

The abuse of the emergency clause by the legislature has to some extent threatened the effectiveness of the referendum. "Five candidates for the office of governor in 1914 promised in case of election to use the veto power to prevent the abuse of the emergency clause." And yet nearly one-fifth of the acts passed in 1915 were emergency laws.

In the opinion of Professor Barnett, the effect of direct legislation upon the legislature has been, generally speaking, beneficial. It has lessened the amount of corruption in that body; has increased rather than diminished the legislator's sense of responsibility, and has furnished protection against the ever present danger that the legislature will mistake the clamor of special interests for public opinion.

Professor Barnett's account of the "Oregon system" in operation is a valuable addition to the literature of this subject.

J. ALLEN SMITH.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN IOWA, VOLUME III. By Clarence Ray Aurner. (Iowa City, State Historical Society of Iowa, 1915. Pp. xii+464. \$2.)

This book—the third volume in a proposed six-volume work—deals with the development of secondary education in the state of Iowa, the first two volumes having treated the beginnings of elementary education. The student of the history of education will find the sections on the Academy particularly interesting. The history of the rise, growth and decline of the Academy in Iowa, is especially suggestive as typical of this interesting phase of the development of secondary education in the United States. The establishment of private normal schools and institutions for training for business pursuits is very properly treated in this connection, representing as they do an early movement toward vocational training as distinguished from the college preparatory function of the academy. The public high school movement is carefully traced from the beginnings in the middle of the past century to the present day, a most difficult task in view of the lack of legislative direction. In the printing and binding, as well as in content, the book maintains the uniformly high standard of the publications of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The students of education in Iowa are fortunate in having an account of education in the state as comprehensive and reliable as this work promises to be when completed. Furthermore, this history of education will no doubt serve as an example and stimulus for histo-