

# EDUCATIONAL SERIES

## Governmental Reforms in the United States for 1909

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Practically all the legislatures elected last year have adjourned and a survey of the reforms achieved in governmental affairs is inspiring. Following are the principal ones:

### Direct Nominations

Five more states have abolished the nominating convention by installing a system of direct nominations. The states are Michigan, New Hampshire, Idaho, Nevada and California. In Montana the senate and house each passed a bill and then would not get together.

Nineteen states now possess a mandatory system of direct nominations covering practically all the offices except that of delegates to the national nominating conventions. These states are California, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

In four states there is an optional system of direct nominations covering practically all the offices except delegates to the national nominating conventions. The states are Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

In three states there is a mandatory system of direct nominations covering practically all the offices except positions in the state government and delegates to national nominating conventions. These states are Minnesota, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In four states there is a mandatory system of direct nominations that apply to certain localities or offices. These states are Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Tennessee.

In ten more states there is an optional system of direct nominations covering certain localities or offices. These states are Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island.

In practically all of the southern states there are direct nominations.

In other words, in about one-half of the states of the union the corrupt nominating conventions are abolished except for the selection of delegates to the national nominating conventions; while in another one-third of the states direct nominations for certain localities are legally required or the system is optional.

Reviewing the movement for direct nominations it is clear that it is sweeping the country, and with a rapidity that is almost incredible when there is considered the strength of the party machines and the people's unorganized condition. In the words of Professor C. E. Merriam in his book on Primary Elections, published last year: "The inevitable conclusion from a study of recent primary legislation is that the delegate system is about to be supplanted by the new form of nomination. \* \* \* So far as the municipal elections are concerned, it must not be forgotten that nomination 'by petition only' looms up as a dangerous rival of the new system, while the non-partisan primary is a factor to be seriously considered."

### United States Senators and Representatives

This year direct nominations have been extended to the selection of United States senators in four states: California, Nevada, Idaho and Michigan. This makes a total of twenty-nine commonwealths wherein the United States senators are directly nominated, namely, Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. This is a remarkable showing.

In three states now there is what amounts to direct election of United States senators. These states are Oregon, Nevada and Nebraska. Nearly all of the party leaders are opposed to this change, therefore the questioning of candidates by citizens' organizations is the only way whereby direct election of senators is likely to be secured.

### Initiative and Referendum

Another reform in the governmental machinery that is producing a mighty increase in the people's power is the restoration of a direct-

vote system for questions of public policy—the initiative and referendum. This year in Arkansas the legislature submitted to the people a splendid constitutional amendment for the establishment of the initiative and referendum, to apply to the state constitution, statute law and municipal law. In the senate the vote was unanimous and nearly so in the house, being 174 to 4. The system proposed is the one in use in Oregon, and the percentages of signatures required are the same, namely, eight per cent for the initiative or a state petition and five per cent for a state-wide referendum.

In Nevada this year the legislature submitted to the next legislature a constitutional amendment for the initiative for constitutional and statute law, and the initiative and referendum for municipal law. The state already possesses the referendum for constitutional and statute law. The members of the legislature elected next year will determine whether or not the amendment will be submitted to the people.

The Wisconsin senate has passed a resolution for the submission to the people of an amendment to the constitution whereby they—the people, can veto the acts of the legislature except emergency measures.

In municipal affairs the initiative and referendum is forging ahead with leaps and bounds. Throughout the entire union the Des Moines system of city government, which includes the initiative, referendum and recall, is meeting with almost universal approval; while in Kansas this year's legislature has established an initiative and referendum in all the cities of the state. Following are the states wherein the initiative and referendum are used in some of the cities or in all of them: Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Delaware, Massachusetts and Maine—a total of twenty states. In Illinois the legislature will probably authorize cities of the state to establish the Des Moines system. In Michigan and Ohio every ordinance granting a monopoly must be referred to the people.

The states where the initiative and referendum are in full operation today for statute and municipal law are Oregon, South Dakota, Montana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Maine. In all of these states except Maine and Montana the initiative applies to constitutional law.

### The Recall

In Nevada this year's legislature submitted to the next legislature a constitutional amendment establishing in the people a power to recall their public officers. The system exists in Oregon and in a considerable number of cities. Throughout the revolutionary war each member of the continental congress could be recalled by the legislature that sent him.

This year the recall has been successfully used in Los Angeles, Calif., and in Junction City and Estacada, Oregon.

### Limitation of Campaign Contributions

Oregon, Colorado and Nebraska are making a brave effort to solve the campaign contributions problem. It will be recalled that in 1906 President Roosevelt in his annual message to congress recommended that the people, through their government, should pay the legitimate expenses involved in the election of their public officials. Mr. Roosevelt suggested that only the two leading parties should receive government funds. Mr. Bryan, Senator LaFollette and others suggested that the third parties, also, should receive a proportionate share of the expense money. Colorado, in true western style, is making the experiment. A law has been enacted which provides: "That the expenses of conducting the campaigns to elect state, district and county officers at general elections shall be paid only by the state and by the candidates for office at such elections, in the following manner."

The state is to pay twenty-five cents for each vote cast at the preceding contest for governor, to be distributed to the party chairman in proportion to the votes cast by each party. Of this, one-half is to be transmitted to the county chairmen in proportion to the votes cast in each county.

Candidates are prohibited from contributing

to campaign committees anything to exceed twenty-five per cent of the first year's salary.

Individuals and corporations are prohibited from contributing, directly or indirectly, any money or property of any kind or character to any candidate or to any committee of a political party, or to the chairman thereof, or to any member or officer thereof. The penalty for violation shall not exceed two years in the penitentiary or a fine of not to exceed \$5,000, or both. The same penalty is provided for any member or officer of a political committee who shall violate this act.

In Nebraska the legislature has provided for publicity for contributions to funds for the election of public officials, above \$25, the publicity to be before the election.

Last year in Oregon the people used the initiative to establish a carefully devised system for limiting the use of campaign funds in the campaigns for the nomination of public officials as well as in the campaign for their election. The act is known as the Huntley law. Its substance will doubtless be enacted wherever the people use the initiative. It is not to be expected that many of the party machines will go in for self-purification to the extent of the restrictions in the Oregon law.

### School of Citizenship

In Nebraska the legislature recommended to the management of the state university that it establish a school of citizenship. There are great possibilities in this direction. For one thing it is entirely practicable to establish an actual republic in every public school in the state. Our federal government did this for the people of Cuba and with glorious results. General Wood, under whose direction its system was applied by Mr. Wilson L. Gill, is completely won over to the school republic, or school city, as it is more generally termed. Ex-President Roosevelt and others were equally convinced. In the Hawaiian Islands the system is being used to train the people to an appreciation and understanding of our republican form of government. In various cities here in the United States the school city is used a little but it does not thrive in a machine ruled community. In Nebraska the conditions are favorable and it is almost certain that the state university will develop a school for practical citizenship that will be a pattern for the other progressive states.

The foregoing are the governmental reforms for 1909 that the writer has been able to discover. Additional data will be disclosed when the year book issued by the New York state library is published.

### Questioning of Candidates

The above described governmental reforms whereby the citizens are regaining their sovereignty have come with but little aid from citizens' associations. But wherever the people have interested themselves and have arranged to systematically question the candidates it has prevented an evasion of the vital issues and the desired reforms have usually been secured. A movement is on foot to establish this non-partisan questioning of candidates in this year's campaign in the few states that elect legislatures, and in next year's state and congressional campaigns. In due time every citizen will be invited to join.

### TO MRS. CLEVELAND, DEBTOR

The democratic party is indebted to Mrs. Cleveland for the earnest and womanly protest she has made against the fraud that was perpetrated against the party when after her husband's death an attempt was made to use his name and influence against the democratic ticket. A man by the name of Brandenburg sold to the New York Times an article purporting to be written by Mr. Cleveland, urging the success of the republican ticket. Mrs. Cleveland promptly challenged the genuineness of the signature and has recently gone into court to testify against Brandenburg. She would naturally shrink from such notoriety and her perseverance in the prosecution of Brandenburg will be appreciated by the rank and file of the party who have not yet forgotten the grace with which she presided at Washington when she went from boarding school into the White House.

### WHY NOT?

Why not tack on an amendment to the tariff bill appointing a committee to make inquiry and report upon the number of timber land owners and lumber companies represented at Washington in person or by attorneys?