

The Commonwealth of Oregon

A Brief History of the Organization and Development of One of the Forty-eight United States of America, Submitted in a Series of Comprehensive and Interesting Letters, Written Particularly for Those Who Have Commenced Studying and Preparing Themselves to Pass the Examination for American Citizenship.

By A. C. Strange, Oregon State Director of Americanization Schools

IV.

THE MAKING OF LAWS IN OREGON

IN OREGON laws are made in two ways, either by the people directly or by a legislature which is a body of citizens chosen by the people for that purpose. In this latter body, there are two houses, a senate of thirty members and a house of representatives of sixty members. Senators hold their offices for four years, the representatives for two years. The former officers are divided into two classes as nearly equal in number as it can be arranged, the purpose being to prevent a house made up wholly of new, inexperienced, legislators. In the house of representatives, however, it is entirely possible that all members might be new to the duties of the office.

Both senators and representatives are apportioned among the counties, after each census, according to the population of the counties. Thickly settled parts of the state thus get the larger number of legislators and find it possible to control in a measure the legislation. To hold one of these offices, a person must be an American citizen, must be at least twenty-one years of age, and must have lived in the county from which he was elected for at least a year.

The legislature meets on the second Monday of January every second year and remains in session at least forty days. A quorum of either house is two-thirds of its membership. However, a smaller number may meet and compel the attendance of absent members.

The doors are always open, except in those rare cases when it is thought best by the members that the proceedings be secret. All bills, except bills raising revenue, which must originate in the house of representatives, may be introduced in either house. Any bill to become a law must be supported by a majority of each house, and signed by the governor. If the governor vetoes the bill, it then becomes a law only when it receives two thirds of the vote in both houses. All bills become laws after ninety days unless an emergency has been declared in the proposed bill. In that event it will become a law as soon as signed by the governor, or within ten days. All bills must be brought into the house and read three times, must be reported upon by a competent committee and must be published and copies placed in the hands of every legislator, before they can be acted on. Thus hasty action upon any measure is prevented.

The second means of enacting laws in Oregon is the initiative and referendum. The former permits the people to propose laws independent of the legislature. This is done by petition, containing the full text of the proposed measure, which must be signed by at least eight percent of the legal voters, and

which calls for the submitting of the measure to the people at an election held in not less than four months from the time the petition is filed. By the referendum, measures are submitted to the voters, either by the legislature or by wording of the initiative petition. Such measures are submitted to the voters at the regular biennial elections and, if supported by a majority, become laws. The governor is not given the power to veto such measures.

Since the initiative and referendum went into effect in 1902, a total of two hundred and thirty-nine measures have been voted on by the people of which a few were county measures voted upon only by the electors of the country. Of these ninety-five have been favored by the people and have become laws. One hundred and thirty-six of these have been initiated by the voters through petition, the others have been submitted by the legislature, or a referendum has been called on some measure passed by the legislature. So it is evident that the people of Oregon have somewhat freely availed themselves of their law making power and, an examination of the laws thus enacted, shows that they are generally wise in their judgment. Most laws passed have been good; those rejected have usually been of doubtful worth.

James J. Crossley

Republican for

UNITED STATES SENATOR

The nomination of JAMES J. CROSSLEY will mean vigorous, genuine, effective and creditable representation of Oregon in the Senate of the United States.

(Paid Advertisement by Crossley for Senator Club.)

EARLE WELLINGTON

Republican Candidate for

State Representative

Primaries, May 21, 1926

Fewer Laws — Reduced Taxation by the elimination of useless or wasteful expenditures

IF ELECTED, I will endeavor to the best of my ability to apply business methods to the work of the legislature, and earnestly work for the best interest of our State and Multnomah County.

EARLE WELLINGTON

(Pd. Adv.)