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Review of Cases on Constitutional Law by Dudley O. McGovney

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In January 1923, the Committee on Uniform Laws Concerning Women, of the National League of Women Voters, made a survey covering the contractual and property rights of married women, the guardianship of children, certain features of the marriage and divorce laws, the eligibility of women for jury service, the relationship of women to public office, and the political status occupied by women. This material, gathered primarily for the enlightenment and direction of State Officers of the League of Women Voters in preparing the legislative programs to be advanced before the legislative bodies of the several states, was published in pamphlet form in March 1924 under the direction of Esther E. Dunshee, Chairman, Committee on Legal Status of Women. That pamphlet, by revision in 1926, was made to include legislative enactments of 1925.

The pamphlet under consideration is a revision of the former publication. It includes legislative changes made prior to 1930 and is the work of Savilla Millis Simons.

The pamphlet contains a summary statement in which a general prospectus of the laws in force in all of the states is set out. There are also forty-eight sections in which the same questions of law, asked and answered generally in the summary statement with regard to the United States as a whole, are asked and answered more specifically with regard to each of the states of the union.

The topics covered by the questions and answers are contractual rights, property rights, domicile, guardianship of children, marriage and divorce. The answers are supported generally by citations of the several statutes of the state the law of which is under consideration. Citations of cases are very rare.

This pamphlet, it is quite frankly admitted, attempts primarily to point out instances in which there is a discrimination against women. It does not, therefore, have the value for a practicing attorney that it would have if it included also those instances in which women share with men the same rights. It is, however, a very helpful book to the student of Domestic Relations or Persons, whose object it is to secure a comparative view of the position of women in the different states.

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This is an up-to-date case book sufficiently condensed to make it serviceable with certain discriminating eliminations for semester courses in Constitutional Law. The author has perhaps overemphasized the historical phase of the subject in his selection of the cases, especially with reference to the years preceding the establishment of the Federal Constitution. This feature need not impair the value of the work, however, for those to whom this historical phase does not appear to be important.

Every experienced teacher of Constitutional Law has his own ideas with reference to formula and system; it is inconceivable that any case book should exactly meet these. This being true, the most decided advantage that a case book on Constitutional Law can have is flexibility of outline. Professor McGovney's text has this feature, and this along with its inclusion of practically all of the important cases up to and including 1930 entitles it to recommendation.

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