

## 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, of Ashland State Normal School.

### VII

#### THE SCHOOLS OF OREGON

IN OREGON'S CONSTITUTION, mention is made of the schools in five clauses. In the first it was provided that the governor should be the superintendent of public instruction for a period of five years after which time the legislature was to provide for such an officer; the second provided for the sale of certain public lands to form a school fund; the third for the establishment of the common schools; the fourth for means of fairly distributing the interest on the school moneys; and the fifth for a board or commission to handle all moneys received from the sales of school lands.

Under the first of these clauses, the governor acted as state superintendent for fourteen years; finally, a separate officer was provided for by the legislature and in 1873 Sylvester Simpson became the first superintendent by appointment of the governor. Since that time we have had nine state superintendents of schools. At the present time the office is held by Charles A. Howard, who was elected last November and took office January 1st, 1927.

It is the state superintendent's task to supervise so far as he can the work of all the schools of the state. This he does by visiting as many as he can, by conducting institutes for the instruction of teachers, by receiving and making reports on school progress, and by communicating with teachers through his courses of study, his plans of work, and personal letters. For this service he is paid a salary of \$4000 a year and holds his office for a term of four years. The position is a very important one which is worthy of the service of the most capable of teachers.

Our school lands were provided for in the law by which Congress formed Oregon into a territory in 1848. Sections 16 and 36 in every township were by this law set aside as school lands, and the territory and later the state sold these areas for school support. By this law, many thousands of acres of fine land became the property of the schools. Unfortunately much of this land was sold before our people realized how valuable it would become. Hence, Oregon has today only about \$8,000,000 in her state school fund when she might have had many times as much money for her schools, had she handled these lands in more business-like fashion and had not been in too great hurry to sell them. Because of this fact which cannot be righted now, the legislature has found it necessary to provide several other means of school support. These are a special county tax, a county two-mill tax for the elementary schools, and a county high schools tax levied upon all districts which do not maintain high schools. Moreover, many districts levy special taxes which in some cases are quite high. Through these means Oregon's very superior schools are now being supported.

The schools of Oregon have come to reach into

many avenues of life. Every child now has near him an elementary school. It is true that some are in poor buildings, have poor equipment and poor teachers, yet even these schools are bringing into the lives of the children wholesome influences. However, there are many very excellent schools with strong teachers which are bringing to the children of their communities a fine leadership. There are also high schools in every county which they can attend without paying a tuition charge. In the way of higher education, there are an agricultural college where the student may learn one of many vocations, a state university where he may study the liberal arts or prepare for a profession, and two normal schools for the training of teachers. In all of these schools the expenses are low. There are also correspondence schools, night schools, commercial schools, trade schools, boys' and girls' clubs, and many public libraries, all maintained to help him get an education and to continue his study just as many years of his life as he wishes to.

Thus Oregon has tried to provide for her children a preparation for life and its activities, for citizenship, and for useful, respected manhood and womanhood. These institutions are open to all children within the state, whether native or foreign born, and many are also open to those adults who care to remain students during their adult years. No American institution, however, means more to the immigrants than the Public School, and to none should they be more devotedly loyal. It is through the avenue of the school that the foreign born and his children can best learn to find his place, a happy, successful place, in American life.

#### SOME COUNTRY!

The Pullman News

America is producing:

Fifty-five per cent of the world's iron ore.  
 Fifty-five per cent of the world's pig iron.  
 Sixty-five per cent of the world's steel.  
 Fifty-one per cent of the world's copper.  
 Sixty-two per cent of the world's petroleum.  
 Forty-three per cent of the world's coal.  
 Fifty-two per cent of the world's timber output.  
 Sixty-five per cent of the world's naval stores.  
 Forty-two per cent of the world's phosphate.  
 Eighty per cent of the world's sulphur.  
 Sixty-three per cent of the world's mica.  
 Sixty-two per cent of the world's lead.  
 Sixty-four per cent of the world's zinc.  
 Sixty per cent of the world's talc and soapstone.  
 Forty-five per cent of the world's barytes.  
 Fifty-five per cent of the world's cotton.

In addition to all this, we have:

Eighty-eight per cent of all automobiles and motor trucks.  
 Thirty-four per cent of the world's railroad mileage.  
 Fifty-one per cent of the world's ton-mile traffic.  
 More telephones and radios than all the rest of the globe.

"Unless you make yourself important to something or somebody you are unnecessary."