

Democracy or Anarchy? A Study of Proportional Representation. By F. A. Hermens.* Notre Dame: Review of Politics, University of Notre Dame, 1941. Pp. xxxi, 447.

This book presents a continuation of the arguments which Walter Bagehot brought against proportional representation some seventy-five years ago. One of the premises on which the argument is based is that parliaments should get things done and should not merely represent. He argues that the "majority system" does help to provide a government which can act whereas proportional representation works in the opposite direction. To use Hermens' words, "If we only think of what separates us and not of what united us, and proceed on that basis in elections, then we are courting the danger of anarchy. And since anarchy is not a workable state of society, conditions would be ideal for dictatorship."

The reader who is looking for an objective analysis of systems of representation will not find it in this book. The weaknesses of the "majority" system are not pointed out, and all the possible arguments against proportional representation are used regardless of their contradictory character. Proportional representation is ethically bad, but the author contends that "there is nothing morally objectionable to the plurality system." So concerned is the author with proving his point that he overstates his case. Proportional representation is blamed for all of the political calamities and woes which have come upon countries which have dared to try it. It is contended that without the aid of this nefarious scheme, neither Mussolini nor Hitler would have come to power. This thesis leaves the reviewer cold. Proportional representation is not that important.

There is no denying that the author has brought a wealth of material together on the operation of representative institutions in Europe and America. He has not weighed all of his evidence nor has he indicated clearly its implications. The extreme case that he makes against proportional representation might be turned against the democratic process itself. In any case, the book is a challenging one and raises some fundamental issues regarding representative government.

HAROLD F. GOSNELL†

BOOKS RECEIVED

Arbitration in Action: A Code for Civil, Commercial and Industrial Arbitrations. By Frances Kellor. New York and London: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1941. Pp. x, 412. \$3.50.

Article XIX of the Covenant of the League of Nations. By Pitman B. Potter. Geneva: Geneva Research Centre, 1941. Pp. 98. \$0.40.

Backbone of the Herring. By Curtis Bok. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941. Pp. xi, 302. \$3.00.

British Constitution, The. By W. Ivor Jennings. Cambridge: at The University Press; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941. Pp. xiv, 232. \$2.50.

Cases and Materials on Conflict of Laws. By E. E. Cheatham, N. T. Dowling, H. F. Goodrich, and E. N. Griswold. 2d ed. Chicago: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1941. Pp. lxiii, 1158. \$7.00.

* Associate Professor of Politics, University of Notre Dame.

† Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago.