Strange as it may seem, bibliographers have neglected the significant field of United States government publications during the formative period of the Union. In contrast to the many valuable catalogues identifying and classifying other kinds of printed materials, the guides to the early public documents of this nation are not, in any sense, definitive. The author of these essays, John H. Powell, a competent historian-librarian, examines the existing state of knowledge concerning American legislative journals, declarations, statutes, and reports for the years 1774-1814. The standard references, Joseph Sabin, Charles Evans, Adolphus W. Greeley, Paul L. and Worthington C. Ford, Benjamin Perley Poore, the Checklist of 1911, all are found to be incomplete and too often inaccurate. This little book, setting down Mr. Powell's Rosenbach lectures at the University of Pennsylvania, is not itself a bibliography, but it learnedly discusses the problem and points the way for further work in the future.

The first publication of the Continental Congress, Mr. Powell says, was the Association in 1774, calling for American non-importation and non-exportation in trade with the mother country. Another interesting and influential document of the time was the Rules and Articles for the Better Government of the Troops. Of course, the Declaration of Independence was a very important publication and is here expertly analyzed from the bibliographical point of view. The author agrees with Hazelton and with Boyd that the Declaration was probably not signed on July 4, though he admits that the known evidence is not conclusive. He proceeds to the early national period where recently available records of the Congress are extensively used to show the development of a system in governmental publishing. Since almost all public documents were printed by Congressional order, the roles of the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate were central. Samuel A. Otis, serving in the latter office for many years, established a mode of operations that was both efficient and enduring.

Pleasingly written and well supported by research, this volume will interest librarians and historians. It is hoped that an enterprising librarian, perhaps Mr. Powell himself, will be stimulated to compile the bibliography which is now lacking. And it is certain that the historian will benefit by Mr. Powell's caveat with respect to the older aids now on the shelves.

Indiana University

Maurice G. Baxter


This book describes the period of greatest agrarian discontent between the Progressive movement and the depression of 1929. The four years after World War I, so ably described by Professor Shideler, were
a time of falling farm prices. Between June, 1920, and May, 1921, agricultural prices fell to one-third of their former value and farmers sustained an estimated net loss of $6,225,000,000. At first the farmers blamed their troubles on the Federal Reserve Board plus the usual group: railroads, grain elevators, meat packers, and commodity exchanges. Solutions were sought both through the government and through self organization. Demand for governmental help by the Farm Bureau and other farm organizations for higher tariffs, prevention of foreign imports, and better credit facilities led to a meeting of six Iowa congressmen in the office of Senator William S. Kenyon on November 13, 1920. This meeting formed the beginning of the Farm Bloc in Congress, a group which eventually pushed through higher tariffs, farm loan acts, regulation of stockyards and packers, exemption of farmers' cooperatives from the anti-trust act, and better warehousing legislation. Other farmers favored self help and pushed cooperative marketing ventures of all types, the most important of which was the Sapiro plan in California. These marketing ideas satisfied the Republican administration much better than governmental intervention of any kind.

Harding's Secretary of Agriculture, Henry C. Wallace, was sincerely interested in helping the farmers. He organized a strong department, improved the annual year book, developed crop and market reporting services, and created the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. These developments soon brought him into conflict with Herbert Hoover's Department of Commerce. Hoover also was an empire builder and, through his interest in food control in the first World War, wanted foreign and domestic marketing of agricultural products included in his department. Wallace had just as much influence with Harding as did Hoover, but the Secretary of Commerce became more important when Coolidge succeeded to the presidency.

In 1922 farmers in many states defeated administration candidates for office and by this action encouraged the formation of the LaFollette Progressive party of 1924. The years 1919-1923 saw the development of the McNary-Haugen plan, later passed by Congress and vetoed by Coolidge, of the Farm Board idea used by Hoover, and of the parity price proposal adopted by Franklin Roosevelt. The details of these plans and ideas and how they waxed and waned among the various farm groups and in Washington are presented in this book.

Farm leaders who participated in these events should be encouraged to read this book and to comment on the accuracy of its facts and its implications, so that pertinent information can be added to that already known. Another book should trace the agricultural discontent during the Coolidge and Hoover administrations. Unfortunately Shideler's volume has no formal bibliography of the books used; hence the reader is forced to rely entirely on the footnotes for this information.

Purdue University

G. Roger Mayhill