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Book Review: Cases on the Interpretation of Statutes, by Frederick Joseph De Slovene

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I am sure that this work will have an effect that the author does not even claim for it or at least it will help along the lines of the necessity of uniformity in our marriage and divorce laws.

CLIFTON WILLIAMS,
Dean, Marquette University Law School.

Cases on the Interpretation of Statutes. By Frederick Joseph De Slovene, Professor of Law, New York University. Published by West Publishing Company. (970 pages.)

The death of Edison has forcibly reminded us that our time is one of marvelous mechanical development. Not only is almost every street in our cities lighted by electricity, but the means of travel and communication, the methods of commerce and manufacture, and numberless related subjects have been revolutionized during the lifetime of the inventor. The development has been so fast that the slow method by which the common law adapts itself to changed and changing conditions has been found to be inadequate to serve the needs of our time. The result has been a resort to the legislature and the enactment of written laws whose bulk staggers the imagination.

The passage of such laws has however by no means decreased the importance of the judiciary branch of our government. Even the best drafted statutes require interpretation and construction. Much more is this the case in regard to statutes whose draftsmen clearly evince a lack of skill. Besides this numerous amendments to existing statutes make the legislative intent frequently all but undiscoverable. Frequent resort to the courts has therefore resulted in a large body of decisions construing the various statutes.

Since this subject is of such present importance both the author and publisher are to be congratulated on their enterprising and pioneering spirit. Text-books on Statutory Construction have been in existence for many years but so far as the reviewer is aware no attempt has heretofore been made to make the leading and illustrative cases on the subject available for classroom use in the form of casebook. There would seem to be no question but that this subject is as much entitled to a place on the curricula of our law schools as many of the standard subjects with which we are familiar.

Since this is a pioneering venture the book undoubtedly will be found by experience to have defects which a future edition will eliminate. It is not the purpose of the reviewer to point out any such defects. Only a test in the classroom for a semester would disclose to a teacher criticism which would be useful to the compiler. Any surface criticism which he might advance would be of little practical use. He sincerely hopes that this newest of the American Case Book Series will receive the recognition and adoption to which it is entitled.

CARL ZOLLMAN,
Professor, Marquette University Law School.