

On the whole, we think the public is to be congratulated on the low average of office fees required on a first registration. According to the table this appears to be, on fifty-eight applications, and property valued at \$922,680, only 15½ mills in the dollar.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW IN THE UNITED STATES.

"The Unwritten Constitution of the United States" is an attractive title for a book, and we took up Mr. C. G. Tiedeman's recent work with a good deal of interest. Mr. Dicey, in his lectures on the law of the constitution, has done much to make our ideas clear upon the subject of written and unwritten constitutional law, as well as many other things. Unwritten constitutional law is not law strictly so-called at all, it is convention; what may be called constitutional morality. In Mr. Tiedeman's book, therefore, we expected to find much interesting information on conventions of the American constitution, of the same character as those which govern with us such matters as when an adverse vote calls for a resignation of a ministry, the precise limits of the resistance to the popular house which it is open to the second chamber to exercise, and so on. We are compelled to say—after two careful perusals—that Mr. Tiedeman's book is something like a once famous lecture of the late Artemus Ward, entitled "The Babes in the Wood," wherein he was wont to discourse on many and various matters, but declined to make any remarks upon the unfortunate babes, because he said he was sure his audience knew much more about them than he did. Almost, if not quite, the only chapters in Mr. Tiedeman's book which really deal with unwritten constitution seem to be those on the Electoral College, and the re-eligibility of the President. The conventional rule which grew up so early in American constitutional history, that the presidential electors were not entitled to exercise any discretion of their own in the choice of a President, though undoubtedly the intention of the written constitution was that they should do so, does seem to us to fairly come within what are known as unwritten constitutional rules, and so, certainly, does the rule (so far as it really exists) that no man shall have more than two terms of office as President.

There seems to us a good deal of confusion of thought in this little book, though in many ways its chapters are interesting. Wherever by virtue of judicial decisions, or otherwise, a departure from the literary theory of their written constitution has established itself among the Americans, the author claims that as part of the unwritten constitution. For example, in the chapter on the inviolability of corporate charters and of charter rights, Mr. Tiedeman deals with the interpretation placed by the courts upon that clause of the constitution which provides that "No State shall pass any law * * * impairing the obligation of a contract," commencing with the Dartmouth College case onwards. But the decisions of the courts on constitutional points, recorded and referred to thereafter as precedents, form part of the written constitutional as much as any statute or fundamental document. It certainly is most strange to