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# ***Oklahoma Constitution An Enduring Document***

The Oklahoma Constitution was and is regarded as remarkable document in various ways. As submitted to a vote of the people for ratification in September 1907, it consisted of 24 articles, subdivided into 346 sections, some of several paragraphs each. It contained about 45,000 words, which critics said was too long to be understood.

The Constitution was amended twice in the same election in which it was adopted. The first amendment reserved rights of initiative and referendum to the people of the state, both in legislative and constitutional changes and to the people of various municipalities in the matter of local ordinances or charters.

The second amendment prohibited the possession and sale of alcoholic beverages, a provision that has outlasted such laws in nearly every other state, although the amendment of liquor laws still are being sought.

The eight-hour workday was given constitutional recognition in all public work and in the mines of Oklahoma at a time when six-day weeks and 10-hour days were common work periods for most employees.

Adoption of the constitution was bitterly fought by Republican candidates in the first election of state officials in 1907. They brought in prominent national figures to bolster their cause but the Democratic candidates, right of referendum and prohibition won.

Critics have alleged that the Constitution went too far in detail on some matters and it has been amended a number of times. Even so, many others think the Oklahoma Constitution has not been any less satisfactory than shorter or different documents adopted by other states.