

civilized world to-day where such a spectacle would be possible—excepting only Russia, Turkey and the United States.

### THE CRISIS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

An address bearing the above title was delivered by Mr. Frederick N. Judson, of St. Louis, at the Missouri State University in October last. Whatever Mr. Judson says or writes on any political or economic subject is worth reading, and this address, published in the St. Louis Mirror of December 24, will be read with special interest by those who have given any thought to the proposed reforms known as the Referendum and the Initiative.

In November, 1904, the people of Missouri will vote on an amendment to the constitution aimed to carry out these reforms. This amendment provides that a number of electors in each congressional district in the State, equal to ten per cent. of the whole number of votes therein at the last election for governor, may require any act or part of an act passed by the general assembly to be referred to the electors at the next general election by filing their signed demand with the Secretary of State not more than 90 days after adjournment. This, in general, is the Referendum. As to the Initiative, it is provided that 15 per cent., instead of 10 as above, shall have power to propose any law, amendment to or repeal of a law, and require that it be referred to the electors of the State. There is also a provision that 20 per cent. of the voters, determined as above, may propose an amendment to the constitution and require its submission to the people. And a further provision is that the veto power of the governor shall not be exercised as to the laws approved or exacted by the electors.

Mr. Judson argues—as always with great fairness and ability—against the amendment. He recognizes the degradation of legislatures and the failings of our attempts at popular government through representation, but he finds the remedy only in enlightened public opinion. "Other reforms," he said, "might be suggested, as in the adoption of pro-

portional or minority representative government. In the last analysis, however, whatever our device, we must bear in mind that popular government cannot run itself. It can only exist where there is a public opinion willing to make the necessary sacrifices of time and trouble for its maintenance."

Let us consider Mr. Judson's objections.

He first alludes to the question whether the proposed amendment would be valid under the clause of the Federal constitution guaranteeing to every State a republican form of government, and quotes certain authorities to the effect that a republican form of government is necessarily representative, and that "a representative democracy cannot be crossed by an absolute democracy."

Now to the average man this kind of talk, like so much of our technical constitutional discussion, seems idle quibbling. If the Initiative and the Referendum are good and desirable, there is no technical quibbling with definitions of the words republican and democratic which will prevent them. We may pass to the real basis of his objections, which brings us to propositions such as the common man, thanks to Mr. Chesterton, may express an opinion on as boldly as the constitutional lawyer.

Mr. Judson says that the people do not take enough interest in legislative issues to come out and vote. "Public indifference," he says, "is uniformly manifested when public measures are at issue, and not the personality of contending candidates." And again he says: "The evidence is thus overwhelming that it is impossible to arouse public interest in voting on public measures to the extent that we can arouse it in deciding between rival candidates for office."

With few exceptions, this, it must be confessed, has been the experience in this matter.

But is it not just what would be expected? Voters have so long been appealed to on grounds of personality which are superficial and sentimental, that they have not been educated to vote on questions of policy which are funda-

mental. Nor will they ever be so educated without practice.

Elections should be educative to the people, and there can be no comparison in this respect between a campaign of personalities and a campaign of principles and measures.

"But," says Mr. Judson, "the details of legislation require deliberation and discussion, and they cannot be left to the determination of those who cannot meet for discussion."

Why cannot voters meet for deliberation and discussion?

With the extension of the public press, with the frequency of public meetings, this objection seems without force. The fact that many voters will not give thought to such matters, and will not take advantage of opportunities to inform themselves, is only saying that many are superficial and are more attracted by the spice of personalities. But, as was said above, our elections have hitherto, in the main, accustomed voters to associate the franchise with personalities rather than with the determination of public measures. No one can deny that to change this would be a decided step forward in popular government. The longer voters permit themselves to be treated as children the longer they will be kept in the childhood state.

"The masses," says Mr. Judson, "can be interested in the personality of candidates when they will not be interested in the details of legislation." So it may be, but is it desirable that it should continue so? And is there any way to educate people to being interested in legislation except by beginning to appeal to them directly?

Besides, there is good ground for faith that it will not be so difficult in the future to arouse public interest in certain questions with which advocates of the Initiative and Referendum are particularly concerned.

For whence has come the degradation of legislative bodies? Why is there so much distrust of these bodies from one end of the land to the other? One of Mr. Judson's objections to the proposed amendment is that "the necessary effect of even a partial adoption of this system of direct legislation

would distinctly impair the dignity and sense of responsibility of our legislatures." To which it may be said that the people have for the past 30 years—since the special era of plutocracy set in—been steadily losing faith in the dignity and honesty of legislative bodies, from the Senate of the United States down to the smallest town council. And why, mainly, has this come to pass? Has it not come from the corruption incident to the greed for special privileges and for special legislation, the fruits of which have been bribery, plutocracy, and an ever increasing concentration of wealth? Honest members of legislatures will tell one that they are helpless, that they cannot stem the tide.

This is the abominable condition which advocates of the Initiative and Referendum seek to remedy, or at least to alleviate. They know that it will not be so easy then to bring to bear the subtle arts of the lobbyist and briber. They believe that these proposed measures will not destroy legislatures or impair their useful purpose, but that they will indeed act as a check to reckless legislation, or will spur on action which may be desired by the people and opposed by special interests.

This is the kind of legislation, that is, legislation affecting special privilege, with which the Initiative and the Referendum will be most concerned, and it is precisely the kind of legislation in which legislative bodies have shown themselves incompetent and faithless to protect and foster the public welfare. This, moreover, is the kind of legislation in which it will be easiest for people to see that their interests are immediately involved, and as to which it may be expected that they will be more and more ready to express their will by voting.

J. H. DILLARD.

#### EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Washington, D. C., Jan. 19.—The vote in the House on Thursday on the motion to reduce the salary of the Director of the Census (S. N. D. North) from \$6,000 to \$5,000, throws an instructive light on the way in which legislation is frequently influenced in Congress.

In presenting this motion Mr. Cowherd, of Kansas City, pointed out that

heads of similar departments in the government here were receiving \$5,000, and that it was but just to the others that Mr. North's salary should be placed at the same figure. His motion prevailed in the committee of the whole, by a vote of 92 to 47. When the matter came up in the House a few hours later this vote was almost exactly reversed. As members are not placed on record when they vote on any motion in committee of the whole, there is no way to determine which members changed their votes. The means by which this change was brought about, however, was indicated to me subsequently by Mr. Cowherd, when, on my expressing surprise that so many Southern Democrats had voted for the larger salary, he said: "They (North's friends) worked both ends against the middle. The Republicans were appealed to to stand by North, because, as secretary of one of the strongest protectionists' organizations in the country, he had performed yeoman service for them, while the Democrats were asked to stand by him, because he had discharged a 'nigger.'"

The hearing before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries the same morning disclosed the same old "cloven" foot. While ostensibly there to advocate the appointment of a commission to determine how the American merchant marine was to be increased, without exception each of the speakers almost immediately argued for ship subsidies. Some threw off the disguise at once, and boldly demanded that the United States treasury be opened. They want a pipe line connection direct (without any elbow-joints) from the treasury to their offices. For fear that the funds in the treasury might not hold out, the American ship builders who were present, the Cramps, et. al., threw every other industry overboard, insisting that the subsidy should be given only to "American" built ships, and should not include all ships of American registry. It was the old story over again of "Good God help me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more."

The Democratic delegation in Congress from Missouri are said to be bubbling over as a result of the denouement following the decision of the Democratic national committee to meet at St. Louis. As the story goes, the St. Louis Republic has practically ignored the entire delegation, making no reference to them either in the proceedings of the extra session or of this, the regular session. Therefore, when Charles H. Knapp, the editor and proprietor of the St. Louis Republic, with others, spoke for and captured St. Louis as the city in which to hold the national convention, and when immediately after the selection of that city was announced Mr. Hearst telegraphed instructions for a complete printing plant which he had ordered some time ago, and which was

about to be sent to Boston to start a Hearst newspaper there, directing that it be shipped to St. Louis instead, thus assuring that the Republic would have an active and powerful competitor right in its own home, the Missouri delegation felt that the fates had evened things up for them with Mr. Knapp.

I trust the editor of The Public will afford me permission to state that after a two weeks' illness (ten days of which I was confined to the house), upon my return to my office I found a stack of mail which has simply since overwhelmed me. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to state to the hundreds of readers of The Public who have written me commending my speech of December 14, that I will as rapidly as possible reply to their letters and send one or more copies of the speech, as requested.

ROBERT BAKER.

## NEWS

Week ending Thursday, Jan. 21.

The official calls for national conventions of the two principal parties are now out.

The Republican call, signed by M. A. Hanna as chairman of the national committee, and Perry S. Heath as secretary, was issued on the 16th. In accordance with the decision of the committee (p. 585), it specifies Chicago as the place of meeting and June 21st at 12 noon as the time. The convention is to consist of a number of delegates at large from each State, equal to double the number of its United States senators and its representative at large in Congress, and from each Congressional district and the District of Columbia two delegates, from each of the Territories of Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Hawaii and Indian Territory six delegates, and from Alaska four delegates. For each delegate an alternate is to be allowed to act in case of the absence of the delegate, such alternate to be elected at the time and in the manner of electing the delegate. All delegates are to be elected not less than thirty days before the meeting of the national convention. Notices of contests must be submitted in writing, accompanied by a printed statement setting forth the grounds of contest, and be filed with the secretary of the national committee twenty