

cratic effort on the part of those who believe in the common man, the mass of the people remains unmoved, untouched, ignorant that there is a social problem they themselves can solve; unconscious of their power to change the institutions under which they are victimized; viewing with apathy and indifference the insolent encroachments of plutocracy upon their rights and liberties. Greed, commercialism and the spirit of conquest stalk across our sacred precincts, worshiped by the masses whom they trample upon and destroy.

Could aught more sharply testify to the moral and mental degeneration of the people than the recent presidential election? In this the people have officially repudiated the doctrine of self-government which our fathers died to establish. They have forgotten what liberty is, and principles of justice have lost their inspiring influence. This degeneration has come in the face of the most active, persistent, unselfish reform efforts that the world has ever seen. Why?

It is because the people have lost faith in American ideals. The conscience of the people is asleep; the consciousness of a loving brotherhood is dulled and deadened. So long as their thoughts are only of self and of the shrewdest winning from others in the bitter struggle for existence, the people will remain as putty in the hands of the careful, discerning, plutocratic genius.

Before we can have an economic system, based upon common right to the resources of nature, the people must want such a system, and want it badly enough to take steps to secure it. They are now indifferent; they are undeniably content to play at the present game in the hope that they may achieve some sort of individual salvation. When they shall be brought to conceive the desirability of a better social order, and a faith in justice and human brotherhood shall revive, they will listen to those who are qualified to teach fundamental economic truths; truths which must be recognized to insure the stability of the state they desire.

The imperative thing to do now is to waken the sleeping conscience of the people; to revive in them a devotion to ideals of human liberty. The faith that is dead must live again; the old fires of freedom must be rekindled, and the new made to blaze with the promise of a better industrial day. The hearts of the people must be made to burn with a faith in the possibility of a heavenly order on earth. This

once achieved, the beauty and significance of the idea of brotherhood once understood and acknowledged, the selfish barriers to the common ownership of the natural resources God has provided for all men will fall like a house of cards.

The only way to stem the coming disaster, or even to raise a better order from its ruins is to strive now to fill the souls of men with vital religious fire. The supremest output of spiritual strength from every devoted, fervent soul who loves the cause of humanity is, in the face of the gathering social revolution, the least that God may hope for or require.

FRANKLIN H. WENTWORTH.

THE DISFRANCHISEMENT PARTY.

"It is of course absurd to speak of the party which withholds from the negroes privileges extended to the whites as the party of 'equal rights to all, special privileges to none.'" Thus says the Dubuque Times, and we quite agree with it. But the Times is in error in implying that the democratic party does this. The organization does nothing of the kind. Its principles are set forth in its national platforms, and in none of these since the party has come under the control of those who are democratic in fact as well as in name is inequality approved. On the contrary, equality is demanded for all regardless of race, color or creed. It is true that southern states which for a considerable period have cast their electoral votes for democratic candidates for president have disfranchised the blacks by amendments to their state constitutions. But this is not the work of democrats, republicans or populists, but of white men acting as such. In the south the question is not one of partisanship, but of race. The Caucasians refuse to accept negro domination, and to prevent it they have taken from the African the elective franchise. Without stopping to discuss the wrong or the right of this, it may be said that no party can be held responsible for what has been done in and by these states unless it approves it. We challenge anyone to find in the democratic national platform of 1900 or that of 1896 a paragraph or a sentence which the utmost ingenuity can torture into even a semblance of approval. And as the party is not and has not been in power, it has not sanctioned the disfranchisement by its acts. The organization, therefore, must be exonerated.

But the republican party cannot be,

for while it does not approve the disfranchisement in its platform it intends to do so in fact. It has control of both branches of congress and of the executive department, it is about to make a new apportionment of congressmen based on the recent federal census, and the Fourteenth amendment provides that when citizens of the United States are disfranchised by any state for other cause than conviction of crime the representation of such state shall be reduced correspondingly. The constitutional provision is mandatory, not permissive. It says shall, not may. Is it to be enforced? Is the republican majority to reduce southern representation because of negro disfranchisement? Not at all. Though he is solemnly sworn to respect and uphold the constitution of the United States, President McKinley protests! And why? For sound public reasons? There can be no sound public reason for a violation of the organic law. He objects for partisan reasons. He is satisfied that with the negroes divested of the elective franchise and the whites thus emancipated from the danger of black domination, the southern whites, no longer bound to act together as a unit in the face of a common menace, will divide politically, that in consequence of the division the republican party will experience a rapid growth south of Mason and Dixon's line, and that by reason of its growth the party will carry states which have been democratic since the completion of reconstruction. For reasons so obvious as to make detail needless, congress will do as the president desires. To strengthen the republican party where heretofore it has been weak, no provision will be made in the reapportionment bill for a reduction of southern representation, and the absence of such provision, especially in view of the constitutional mandate, will be an approval by the republican party of the practice of taking from the negro the franchise which the party, in its earlier and better days, conferred upon him for his protection. Now that it has become the facile instrument of plutocracy, the party is eager to undo what it did when it was a party of freedom.

The very opposite of what the Times implies is the fact. The democratic party is not in favor of negro disfranchisement. It objects to it first because it is wrong in principle, and next because, from the political standpoint, the party has everything to lose and nothing to gain by it. The republican party favors negro disfran-

chisement because it is the forerunner of the disfranchisement of white wage-earners—because the more the elective franchise is restricted the easier it will be for combined and organized wealth and monopoly to govern; and it also favors it because it promises to give the party control of states in which hitherto it has had a merely nominal existence.—Dubuque (Ia.) Telegraph.

A PLEA FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

For The Public.

The election is well over, and we are gradually settling back to the consideration of matters of still more practical politics. This being the case, I would like to commend with as much force as possible a notion of method to all reformers.

We all know how difficult it is to make even one convert to any advanced economic idea. One reason for this is that people in general do not care to trouble themselves deeply about anything. Especially do they not wish to bother about others' suffering, having enough of their own, or being safely out of its reach, as the case may be. Often, however, we find those who would really be willing to consider new theories, but who say to us that there is no use in doing so. The theories may be good, but they are not practical now. They have not enough adherents to command majorities. In some far future they may be worth while analyzing, but not now. Therefore, why spend thought upon them?

Thus we fail to attract interest which we might have easily, if anything less than majorities were useful in our legislative system.

This condition would not alter to one of much greater propagandic ease were we to have direct legislation by the people, though that would be of benefit. We had really a popular vote upon imperialism lately, though complicated by other issues—mainly bread-and-butter ones. What we need most is not so much that the people may be readily divided en masse to deliver a majority verdict upon some issue they have already made up their minds about. We need far more that all political creeds which any portion of the people believe shall have the means of being held up before the nation as forcefully as the numbers of those believing them warrant. In other words, we need the representation of our ideas in our representative bodies. We do not have it. Majorities only are represented, because majorities only can elect.

Let us take, for example, the state of Missouri. Probably two-fifteenths of the voters in the state are prohibitionists. I am not a prohibitionist, but I think that under those circumstances they should have two of Missouri's 15 representatives in congress. If not, why not? But they have absolutely no representation in congress, because they have no majority in any one district, and consequently vote for persons and policies they do not like, thereby swelling the influence of such policies to their own discomfort. The single tax men in Missouri are one-fifteenth of the voters. But they must vote for something they only partly believe in, and have no representation that is quite fearless and outspoken, because their mouthpieces are more indebted to others for majorities. The republicans of Missouri are a very large proportion, but have usually two representatives out of 15, because the districts are arranged to give a small majority in each against them. Possibly the socialists in the state could cast one-fifteenth of the vote, being numerous in the cities and labor unions. But instead of perhaps two prohibitionists, one single taxer, a socialist, five republicans and six democrats, the congressional delegation of Missouri is more likely to be two republicans and 13 democrats. Does anyone call this representation? It is nearer misrepresentation.

Not only is congress not a miniature of the nation as it actually stands, but this fact reacts upon the nation's units, and they will not take an interest in a new idea because it will not count. What is the consequence? We have two large political bodies, each naturally ultra-conservative because needing a majority. In order to get that majority there must be a highly organized machine, delicately responsive to central management, and therefore peculiarly fitted for oligarchic control, which is susceptible to corrupt influences, and finds it easy to work through them. The people are compelled to choose between these two parties or nothing.

With proportional representation, on the other hand, we should have at once probably half a dozen parties, each of which would have at least a voice in the affairs of the country. Machine politics would immediately become less powerful. There would be no parties so large as now. Probably the tendency would be for parties to multiply and become comparatively smaller. They would combine upon issues strictly of the moment, which would, of course, still be decided by majorities. Upon theoretical questions there would be a

willingness to consider, a responsiveness, and therefore a progressiveness not possible while minorities are unrepresented. For any sound reform there would be hope, for it could obtain a hearing, not as now, by stealth and skillful maneuvering, but by its own few adherents, responsible to their electors. Of course what is true of the nation and congress, is also true of states, cities and their representative bodies.

This political reform, like all political reforms, is only a means to social and economic reforms. But without democracies instead of monarchies, or without real representation instead of unreal, social reforms are slow coming. Moreover, we can much more easily bring about a political reform than an economic one—remember the Australian ballot laws. Personally I am very sure I can make 20 converts to proportional representation to one, for instance, to the single tax. These 20 can do likewise. I rarely find a man—not one in 30—who will disagree with the proportional representation idea. More than half will disagree with direct legislation. More than nine-tenths will at least withhold opinion on the single tax. Are not these considerations very strong arguments that all who champion minority ideas should combine upon definite propaganda of proportional representation? It would soon be followed, I think, by opportunity for its gradual introduction.

ETHELBERT W. GRABILL.

University of South Dakota.

AMONG THE DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA.

Probably most have heard more or less of the Doukhobors. This Russian sect of uneducated peasants has been suffering persecution at home for a century and more because of the fact that its members abjured the established church and condemned war and military service. But it was not until about 13 years ago, when universal conscription became the rule, that their troubles became unbearable. These inoffensive people, who have charmed all who have met them by their simple piety and kindness, were banished from their homes and exposed to all kinds of hardships. At last, some influential Russians stirred themselves on behalf of these oppressed peasants and obtained as a great favor from the czar permission for them to leave the country at their own expense. They had but little of their savings left after these years of sorrow, and it was necessary for the quakers of England and America to