

ualistic and more radical than that of the average socialist of to-day. I hate the programme of the socialistic party which deals only with the economic side of life. Socialism should not mean equality of wealth, but equality of opportunity. On the other hand, I am opposed to the idea that the State shall be the owner of every capitalistic system. I, as a statesman, know from my experience that it would lead to a dangerous imperialism. My idea is that municipalities and counties should own that which the socialists want the state to own. The only thing for the state to control would be the education.

At the same interview the Italian King, as reported by Gorky, made the following profession of republicanism:

If the people want a monarch, let them have one. If they want a republic, well, they may have it. But what I want is the United States of the World. There should be one President of the World, to be elected once every five years.

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"Golden Rule" Kohler.

The acquittal of "Golden Rule" Kohler and his return to public duty at the head of the Cleveland police force is welcome news. It was evident enough that the attack upon him was not because he was an unfaithful official but because he was a faithful one.

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Land Valuation in Cleveland.

An innovation of extraordinary interest and civic value is the work, now completed, of the Cleveland board of assessors of real property. This board is composed of Arthur F. May, president; John A. Zangerle, secretary; Frederic C. Howe, Joseph F. McKenna and Theodore M. Bates, who were elected last fall (vol. xii, pp. 1043, 1089, 1162; vol. xiii, 194, 219) and have been steadily at work ever since. For chief clerk they employed W. A. Somers, the inventor of the unit system of land valuation under which the entire work of the board has been done. In their report, which is now published, they say that the work "could have been done neither in the time allowed, nor with the same general satisfaction, without his constant aid and direction." That the work has been done satisfactorily appears evident from a statement in the report that although the Board had but one reply to objections to its valuations, namely, "Give the Real Estate Board an option for thirty days at our appraisal," and "if they can't sell it we will reduce it," only one owner submitted to this reasonable test. The community participated extensively with the assessors—more generally than ever before—and, as the assessors report, it was manifest to all that there was "no place for favorites." For "favor-

ing one lot meant favoring the street," which required "a change of the next street, and so on until the whole neighborhood and district would be reduced, all of which individual, local and sectional favoritism would immediately and readily be discernible even by the uninitiated." Over 145,000 parcels of land and more than 100,000 buildings have been appraised by these assessors, under unusual difficulties, in seven months, and both method and result are set out in detail in the printed report for the information of all the people.

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SCHOOLS FOR CITIZENSHIP.

The fevered anxiety of perhaps a majority of the American people over what Theodore Roosevelt would say and do when he returned, presents a curious spectacle to a reflective mind. That the views of a former President or any distinguished man should awaken interest and be discussed is always a sign of political health, but that sort of waiting interest which implies, "Please tell us what to do and think," is not.

Why should the most energetic people on earth, with the tools of self-government in their hands, entertain for an instant the idea that they need any "man on horseback" to save them in the presence of any crisis, however momentous? Why does not the political atmosphere vibrate with this sentiment: "We can save ourselves. The welfare of our Republic, or the success of any policy, depends upon the whim of no man or party of men"?

The astonishment of the American people that a President should talk vigorously about a square deal, is a sad confession of their own inefficiency as citizens of a republic.

* * *

Once, when in Bern, Switzerland, I sought an interview with the then President, Mr. Brenner, but found he was spending a short vacation in Germany. A few days later I called upon Mr. Mühlmann, statistician of the Canton Berne, at his residence, to secure some data upon the public utilities owned and operated by the Canton. Incidentally I asked Mr. Mühlman if President Brenner had returned. He replied: "Really I do not know, but he lives just across the street. You can readily find out there." Afterwards I did ascertain from the housemaid, without the formality of cards, guards, secret service detectives, or pomp of any sort.

The incident was typically 'Swiss. President Brenner is an able, highly honored and much-loved man. He has influence, but his personality and

opinions, or even his actions, are not vital to the welfare of this democratic people. What they think counts, and they do not degrade themselves by maudlin hero-worship or render their President's existence intolerable by vulgar curiosity, or prying into his private affairs. I do not suppose one man in fifty in Switzerland knew their President was out of the country.

But they all did know a popular vote was soon to be taken upon an amendment to the national Constitution, placing the water power of the nation under the absolute control of the Federal Congress, to be used for the public good.

They were not interested in Mrs. Brenner's wardrobe, or President Brenner's daily itinerary, but they were discussing the private monopoly formed to seize the power sites and trustify the people's "white coal," as they picturesquely call their mountain streams. And when the time came they "conserved" these natural resources while we were still talking about it and waiting for Teddy to come home.

This difference in the attitude of the Swiss and the American people toward their public men is pregnant with meaning. In the last analysis it spells life or death for popular government.

It is not the result of any superiority of the Swiss in point of natural intelligence, but of different methods of political action.

We elect men to do things for us; they not only elect men, but they hold the power to do things themselves.

We identify political issues with the personalities of leaders; they separate issues from politicians.

We are forced to pin our hopes for reform upon some man or some party; they look to the voice of the whole people.

We depend upon representative democracy; they upon direct democracy.

When we are misrepresented we howl, yowl, protest and elect other men, usually to find ourselves betrayed as before; they promptly invoke a vote of the people upon the issue at stake, settle the question, end the whole farce, and the land has peace.

In short, the American waits for some leader to save him; the Swiss waits not, but saves himself.

If the Swiss Federal Congress enacts a law which provokes enough popular disapproval to lead 30,000 citizens to demand, by means of a formal petition, a popular vote thereon, the fate of the law is determined at the polls by that ulti-

mate legislature—the whole people. This is called the Referendum.

Should desired laws be delayed, 50,000 citizens can, by a petition, secure action by this larger legislature, and if their proposal finds favor, it is enacted by the people without delay. There is the power of the Initiative.

It is scarcely necessary to add that copies of all laws so voted upon, are circulated among the people before the poll is taken, and are widely discussed. Such laws are void of legal verbiage, are written in plain language, are easily understood, and woe to that proposed law which is obscure in meaning or contains the gentle joker. The only time a Swiss representative appears before the people either before or after election, is when he takes the platform to favor or oppose measures up under the referendum.

This luminous phrase in the constitution in the Canton Zurich, puts the Swiss point of view before us in a nutshell: "The people exercise the law-making power with the assistance of the legislature."

In local, State and national affairs, the people have been exercising legislative functions for half a century. Surely enough practical experience has been had to determine the results of this extremely democratic system. The Swiss people themselves seem satisfied with the Initiative and Referendum to such a degree that, as ex-President Frey, in an interesting letter, writes: "The Swiss people will not give them up, and you might just as well propose to change the Swiss republic into a monarchy as to expect them to abandon these constitutional rights."

But this does not necessarily answer the demand for "results." If we consult the authorities we shall find a majority of them basing their whole estimate upon the legislative product—that is, upon the kind of laws which have been adopted or rejected. The democratic student points to some change made by the people which he thinks desirable, and says, "There, see that! A legislature would not have done that. What a fine thing! The Referendum is a success." But the aristocratic student digs up what he thinks vast mistakes in judgment on the part of the people and cries, "Look at that popular decision! A legislature would have known better. The Referendum is a failure." So the authorities clash over what one were tempted to call their predestined conclusions.

Generally the really significant result of this whole marvelous experience is given scant consideration. That result is this: Direct participation in

law-making by means of the Initiative and Referendum has vitalized, educated, and charged with courage the whole Swiss electorate. It has created in them as nothing else could possibly have done, a real consciousness that the government is theirs, and that while leaders may come and leaders go, their permanent welfare depends upon themselves. It has exalted the status of the private man and filled him with a fine pride of citizenship.

The Swiss do not look up to government, but across at it. Franz Arnold of Altdorf, the home of William Tell, may be elected to the Federal Congress, but he is still Franz Arnold and is not held to be suddenly endowed with supernatural wisdom or legislative ability by the incident of election. His constituents also have opinions and the Referendum has made them all legislators. As long as "Nationalrat Arnold" represents them fairly and honestly, they will return him, and not stupidly go into a fury, forget his whole record and reject him, should he vote for one or two measures they dislike. They will simply veto the objectionable measure at a referendum and send Franz back to try it again. "The Nationalrat" may think one way, but they think another, and they will not deprive themselves of the service of an able legislator because he differs from them on a few points.

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In Switzerland, these fearful and wonderful things called "laws" have lost their halo of sanctity, and power to awe and suppress. The people are accustomed to having bills placed in their hands to make and unmake. They have found that laws are simply proposals agreed to, and that they are quite as able as legislators to determine their utility and value. If mistakes are made, they know themselves to be responsible and so they have learned caution, prudence and restraint, and to act only on due deliberation.

"Does the Referendum lead to a more intelligent and actively interested citizenship?" I asked M. Gaston de Muralt, banker, conservative, descendant of an old Swiss patrician family, and the British consul at Bern.

"I think so by all means," was the reply.

"How do you know that? From what do you judge?"

"From my own experience. I am continually led to the investigation of questions by being called to vote upon them, which otherwise I would have taken no interest in, or have left to the city or State councils to decide. From my conversations with friends on pending questions and from the general interest aroused, I conclude that this increased interest is true of all."

It was interesting to have a highly educated business man state in a matter of fact way that the Referendum had educated *him* and made *him* a better citizen.

I knew it was universally true, since in all essential features Swiss politics were before the introduction of Direct Legislation, in exactly the same condition as American politics to-day—apathy, indifference, corruption, and all.

Adopting Direct Legislation as a practical expedient for securing equitable laws, the Swiss have not only got the laws they wanted, but they have discovered to the world a far greater thing: a *practical method of making efficient citizens*. Their school for citizenship is as hopeful for the future of democracy as was the school of Pestalozzi at Zurich for the education of children. They have not finished their education, nor are they terrestrial angels, but they are very busy with fundamental, economic and social problems, and as fast as the national mind advances, needed changes are made, so institutions are kept flexible. Switzerland is the only country on the globe in which the political center of gravity lies in the people, and in which it is impossible for the people to be betrayed.

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It would no doubt be impertinent and unpatriotic to suggest that we wise Americans could learn anything from a little country like Switzerland, since we have so many more dollars, skyscrapers and acres of land than they. But surely the sons of Uncle Sam who realize that the high carnival of misrepresentative government which has been going on in this country these many years, is mainly due to the indifference, apathy, and stupid partisan prejudices of the people themselves, cannot afford to turn up their noses at *American* institutions and experience.

It is notable that six States of the Union have already started these schools for citizenship—that is, have adopted the Initiative and Referendum; and, if we find that the citizens of these States are "waking up" and discharging their duties with hitherto unprecedented fidelity, it may be cheering to those who have lost hope and see no way out of the perplexing labyrinth in which in the other States we find ourselves.

Oregon and Oklahoma are two of those States—one Republican, the other Democratic. Oregon has voted upon 32 questions in the three State elections held since the adoption of the Initiative and Referendum. Oklahoma has had one election and voted on five problems. It were highly interesting, but outside the purpose of this writing, to discuss those laws the people have enacted or re-

jected. Our inquiry is: "What has been the effect of the Referendum upon the people?"

The bald fact that an average of 77 per cent of those who go to the polls in Oregon vote upon questions, shows a live interest. In Oklahoma the average stands at 79 per cent. This is an average—mind you. The lowest stands at 61 per cent; the highest at 89 per cent. On all important issues 8 or 9 voters out of 10 show their concern by their votes.

Associate Justice McBride of the Oregon Supreme Court, writes: "I am satisfied that this method of legislation is a great educator of the ordinary citizen in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship."

Mr. J. J. Johnson, editor of the "Pacific Grange Bulletin," who is perhaps in closer touch with the masses than Judge McBride, in a marvelously interesting survey, says: "The voters show marked interest in all matters submitted to them, and their good judgment has been exemplified by the results of their ballots. It was freely predicted by the enemies of this system and by some others that many untried measures would become laws by the want of interest among the voters—that the State would be flooded with extreme and unwise legislation, but our experience has proven otherwise. We have found this system a great educational factor. The new responsibility thus placed directly upon the voters has caused them individually to study not only the measures submitted to them under the Initiative or Referendum, but all other matters of legislation as well. They have become more interested in all matters affecting the well-being of the State."

It is true that "inspired" reports about Oregon, emanating mainly from corporation sources, tell a different tale. But the overwhelming flood of evidence from uninspired sources leaves no doubt that Mr. Johnson and Judge McBride have spoken the truth.

Note especially Mr. Johnson's observation that the voters are interested not alone in the laws submitted, but are alert upon "all matters affecting the well-being of the State."

He continues: "Our system is especially good, I think, along educational lines—in that to each legal voter is sent the text and arguments, pro and con, of each measure submitted. This is done by the Secretary of State in pamphlet form. We find these measures being discussed by debating societies, trade unions, and other gatherings for that special purpose. In fact people everywhere and from nearly every walk in life, immediately prior to election are busy in this discussion and study. And we have found that the voters as a

rule desire to serve the best interests of the State and strive earnestly to understand every measure to be voted upon."

Like evidence can be had from Oklahoma.

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Stop a moment and think how much the average voter in any State actually knows about the five most important laws proposed or passed at the last session of his State legislature—to say nothing of the minor legislation enacted, or the vast flood of bills introduced. Try it upon yourself to begin with. Then bring your imagination into play and follow those Oklahoma and Oregon voters studying *the actual text of statutes*, with the responsibility of the decision upon them,—laws pertaining to taxation, education, military matters, temperance, home rule for cities, sale of public lands, regulation of corporations, etc. Think of the voters studying these questions wholly aside from partisan politics and the squabbles of candidates for official jobs.

Is not this literally a State *at school*?

Can you not see that aside from the vast body of sociological, economic and political facts literally ramifying the body politic by this process, the people are bound incidentally to discover other things of great importance to them? They gain, for example, a better knowledge of the workings of governmental machinery, which must eventuate in a better operation of that machinery; that is, better administration of law.

Again: they find out, often to their surprise, "Who's who." It is an old trick of those highly respectable citizens composing the Interests to hide behind political machines and get through their special legislation under the cover of the Republican or Democratic parties. Your sound Republican, who thinks he is casting his ballot for the Grand Old Party of Lincoln, may actually be voting for a railroad company, an oil trust, or whatever patriotic group of dollar gatherers happens to be placing its eggs for the hatchings. It is, no doubt, a pleasant and profitable arrangement. But when an issue is brought up under the Referendum, the party loyalty argument goes glimmering. The beneficiaries of privilege are forced into the open. The private wires between corrupt and detested bosses and the respected president of the first national bank who supplies him with funds, are laid bare. The disillusioned voters then begin a complete revision of their economic and political notions, which is the first necessary step toward emancipation from the burdens they now complain about so loudly.

Direct legislation is not "the remedy" for our

social ills, but it will educate the masses regarding those ills and provide the means of applying effectually whatever remedy proves best.

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Another result is the generation of a social consciousness as against the old insane spirit of party fealty. Men to-day will even refuse to consider thoroughly the proposals of an opposing party; or, even if they favor those proposals, will remain silent. But an entirely new alignment of forces appears when a referendum is taken. Men disregard party and vote their convictions upon issues so presented. A higher good is visibly at stake than party success—the good of all. In this atmosphere is born a new conception of citizenship and a passion for social service.

Did you note Mr. Johnson's word, "the voters as a rule desire to serve the best interests of the people"? Thus the field of what we may call the social psychology of the Referendum opens before us. We may not now follow its pleasant, cheering pathways, but I trust I have made clear the truth that the most important consequence of Direct Legislation is not the intrinsic value of the laws that are voted up or down, but the fact that the *people are doing it*. The social intelligence and political muscle so developed render it easy for the people to take care of themselves in any emergency. If they make mistakes, they can readily rectify them and learn caution from that experience.

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From this school of citizenship there comes forth a body of voters who cannot be fooled, who cannot be bribed to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, and who cannot be frightened since the exercise of their powers brings self-confidence and courage.

In such a democracy it is impossible for tyranny of any type to flourish, and the "man-on-horseback" type of leader shall find scant room for the display of his personality, however spectacular that may be, or the exercise of his dangerous powers.

"Has the President of Switzerland returned from abroad?" "I do not know, but he lives just across the street. You can find out there." *O wise Swiss!*

GEORGE JUDSON KING.

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I suppose the result must be . . . the establishment of society under a wholly new idea. . . . The leading features of any such radical change must be a deep modification of the institution of property—certainly in regard to land, and probably in regard to much else.—Harriet Martineau.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SOMERS SYSTEM FOR VALUING REAL ESTATE.

Cleveland, June 26.

The unit system of valuing land and buildings used in the recent quadrennial valuations in Cleveland, was devised by Mr. W. A. Somers (vol. x, p. 2), formerly City Engineer of St. Paul, Minn. He started an investigation which resulted in the completion of this system about sixteen years ago, and during all these years he has been a close observer and careful investigator of site values in very many of the large cities of the United States. His system undertakes to furnish persons charged with the appraisal of land values in cities, with a standard of measurement.

The Somers unit system itself may be likened to a yard stick. It is a method by which judgments of value may be easily applied to sites having varying conditions and differing sizes and shapes.

Into the value of a city lot enter three factors. These three factors are location, size, shape. Comparing the value of one lot with another, one must necessarily compare or attempt to compare three factors on one hand with three on the other. The impossibility of comparing three separate and distinct things with three other separate and distinct things must be apparent to any one. The trouble that we have always had in ascertaining land values is largely due to the failure to recognize the existence of these three factors. Obviously to make an intelligent comparison, two of the three factors must be eliminated.

Under the Somers unit system, size and shape are at first eliminated and only location is considered. Thus we are able to compare street with street, block with block, one side of the street with the other side of the same street—comparisons that are easily made.

This makes it easy, first, for the appraiser to use the knowledge and judgment that he may possess in comparing and arriving at valuations; and, second, for the people of the community to convey to the appraiser their notion of the comparative values of various locations.

The size and shape are eliminated by assuming a lot a foot wide and one hundred feet deep in every instance. Thus, at all times we are considering the same size and shape. That being so, we pay no attention to the size and shape of any particular lot but simply compare one location with another. Location, of course, is the chief factor in the value of a city site. Every such site gets its value through its frontage, because through its frontage there is access to the life and business of the city, and in no other way can there be such access.

By obtaining values on unit feet, as they are called, the whole method of appraisal is simplified; and when such unit feet are valued, the application of the value to varying sizes and differing shapes and locations, with reference to corners and alleys, is performed mathematically by means of a table of values that Mr. Somers after very wide investigation has devised. Lots that have various depths have a