

appropriating money must be on public file for seven days before it becomes effective; all franchises must be submitted to a vote of the people for approval before they become operative; and officers must be under no secret obligations to public service companies in the way of passes, special rates, or free services.

These specific provisions for publicity have created a general spirit that demands the bringing of everything in connection with the city government out into the open. Campaigns are conducted practically altogether in open meetings, hundreds of which occur in every city election; and every meeting of the City Council is minutely reported in the daily newspapers. The result is that public opinion, well informed and intelligent, moulds the action of the City Council.

The power of this public opinion is rendered still more effective by provisions for an essential part of the Des Moines plan—the Initiative, the Referendum, and the Recall.

Having thus provided for intelligent, active and effective public opinion, making the city government responsible to the people for its every act, the next thing of importance, indeed the great object, is to give it the means of efficient administration. It is therefore invested with every power incident to city government—legislative, executive and judicial—so that there can be no excuse for inefficiency.

Prompt, efficient, business-like administration of municipal affairs is the natural result. When you have intelligent public opinion stimulating a business-like administration of common affairs, isn't that something like the fulfillment of the prophecy of democracy?

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Now, how does this novelty in municipal government work out in practice?

It has been tried in Des Moines only a little more than two years, and circumstances during that time have hampered the new form of government more or less. Yet it has undoubtedly been a great improvement—indeed, an almost incalculable improvement—upon the old form.

The administration has been prompter, and the city has been cleaned up physically and morally far beyond the old order. Permanent improvements have been secured to an extent not even approached in the past. And all has been done upon a tax levy ranging from .8 mill to 4.2 mills less than during the eight preceding years. To be exact, the levy during the two years of the Des Moines plan has averaged 2.7 mills less than it

averaged under the old plan during the eight years preceding.

To be sure, there has been a great civic awakening in Des Moines, and to this some observers may ascribe the improvements, upon the theory that "a new broom sweeps clean." But the fact is that one of the chief merits of the Des Moines plan is its effect in fixing popular attention upon public affairs, and thereby tending to arouse and sustain popular civic interest.

Under the new plan, the average citizen of Des Moines takes personal pride in his city government. Under the old plan, it was customary to criticise, or to speak apologetically, or to avoid the subject. This could not promote alertness. Ninety-five per cent of the citizens of Des Moines are thoroughly satisfied that the change of two years ago was a good change. They would not go back to the old form under any consideration.

JAMES R. HANNA.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

ROOSEVELT'S CONVENTION.

Saratoga, N. Y., Sept. 28.

Twenty-four years ago the man who is absolutely dominating the Republican convention here today was leading a forlorn hope in the three-cornered Mayoralty fight in New York City, with A. S. Hewitt and Henry George as opponents. Things have happened since then. The then exponent of the machine, the representative of the "interests," is today the champion of direct nominations. This is the issue the State machine has selected for its last and decisive stand against the radical and progressive forces in its party.

Before the convention which nominated Blaine for the Presidency, the insurgents of that day entered into a solemn agreement that in the event of Blaine being nominated they would withdraw from the convention and refuse to support the nominee. Roosevelt was a party to that agreement. It was one of the great disappointments of George William Curtis's life when Roosevelt deserted, went back on his promise and supported Blaine. As editor of Harper's Weekly he quoted those lines from Browning:

"Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat."

At a later date, when Roosevelt was beginning to loom on the horizon as a political star of the first magnitude, the editor of *The Public* dubbed him a "swashbuckler," and in the light of subsequent events I imagine he has never had occasion to change his estimate of the man. For swashbuckler Roosevelt was, and swashbuckler he is today.

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What manner of man is this that could violate, with impunity apparently, the confidence of men like Curtis, who can sound the depths of real democracy

in some of his speeches and yet qualify his remarks with "weasel" words that cause genuine Democrats of all parties to doubt his sincerity and to put aside his radicalism as superficial and untrustworthy? Seeing him handle the convention here today gave one at first hand the opportunity of judging of his strength as a leader; made understandable his wonderful hold on the masses of the people.

The fate of direct nomination looked blue indeed at one stage of the proceedings. All "the old guard"—Barnes, Fassett, Wadsworth and their henchmen—had taken the platform to urge the minority report from the Committee on resolutions, which was a miserable straddle leaving the question of direct nominations optional and indefinite. They had successfully scared the delegates by dangling before them the inevitable outcome of the majority report as leading to the Initiative and Referendum. They appealed to the convention to preserve the party system; to realize that the adoption of the majority report meant the abolishment of State conventions which had existed for a hundred years.

But five minutes of the time set for the debate remained when Roosevelt took the platform. His first sentence electrified the assembly! He then went on to make an appeal to trust the people—even to the extent of accepting the Initiative and Referendum. He pointed out that the difference between the two factions was that the reactionaries were afraid to trust the people while he and his followers were not. He made an argument for direct nominations that would almost do credit to a La Follette. It was the appeal of democratic Republicanism—unequivocal and entirely free from "weasel" words. He seemed to realize the strength of a principle plainly and squarely put, and it was not strange to find when the votes were counted that he had routed the machine—horse, foot and dragoons.

In a convention of democratic Democrats this speech would have been commonplace perhaps, but uttered in a Republican convention in contrast with the other efforts, it stood out clear and bold.

Roosevelt is not democratic in any profound sense, but he is democratic relatively to his party and his times. Therein lies his strength, as I view it. He is ahead of his party just enough to be a leader, but not so far that they lose confidence in his "sanity" or conservatism. In his management he is astute; and although his methods are of the steam roller kind, its driving power is furnished by an appeal to fundamental principles.

LOUIS B. PARSONS.

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DO YOUR OWN THINKING.

Philadelphia, Pa.

I have lived in this world nearly 50 years; and, after a ripe experience from hard conditions to slightly better during that time, I think the greatest thing in the world for men and women is to do their own thinking.

For thousands of years the priests did our thinking; for hundreds of years the newspapers have done it.

I can't see that we are now doing our own thinking in the main any more than at any earlier period of recorded history. Of course there are glorious

flashes, here and there. There is the Alexandrian period; the Athenian; the Roman; the Renaissance. But after all our schools and our boasted progress, it still remains true that eighty per cent of the human race are unable to do their own thinking. The average man or woman says, after hearing a sermon or reading a newspaper editorial, "sure that's what I think"—when they haven't thought at all.

Teach people to do their own thinking, as the Quakers and the Scots do—always examining and discussing every proposition before accepting it—and you will revolutionize the world in fifty years.

Excuse the homily—I suppose most people are like Barrie's hero, Corporal Shlach, who hated to think "because it made him sweat."

GEORGE C. WATSON.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before, continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, October 4, 1910.

The Republican Party in Wisconsin.

At the post-primaries (p. 879) convention of the Republican party in Wisconsin, held at Madison on the 27th, there was a unanimous vote, on motion of F. E. McGovern, the primaries candidate for governor, in favor of the re-election of La Follette to the senate, he having been nominated at the primaries (p. 865). By this vote every Republican candidate for the legislature who was present and voting at the convention is pledged, and every such candidate not present was invited to record his obligation by making the pledge by letter. It is reported that legislative candidates who "dodge" this pledge will be opposed by the party at the election.

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Following are the principal demands of the platform adopted by this convention:

Real downward revision of the tariff. The Taft-Payne-Aldrich law condemned as a violation of the party pledges.

Physical valuation of railroads and more stringent regulation of them.

Second choice primaries.

Initiative and referendum.

Recall of unsatisfactory elective officials.

Protection from interference under all anti-trust laws with labor unions and farmers' co-operative associations.

Publicity of campaign contributions and expenditures.

Limitation of expenditures of candidates for office.