

period. This proposition the company refused to accept.

Mayor Johnson then conceived the idea of applying his holding-company plan to the three-cent fare lines, then in process of construction. A corporation was organized under the name of the Municipal Traction Company, one of the directors of which is A. B. du Pont, who is helping to value Chicago traction properties for the city. This company has taken a lease of the three-cent fare lines, soon to begin operation, and will have the actual management of them. All profits in excess of a fixed dividend rate of six per cent. are to be used in making improvements and paying for the property. The city will have the right to take over the plant at any time after securing the necessary enabling authority from the State Legislature.

A few months ago the old company offered to make a franchise settlement with the city. It asked for a blanket twenty-year renewal, and offered in return to sell seven tickets for 25 cents, good for use at any time. The cash fare was to be five cents. In its detailed features this ordinance was objectionable for several reasons. The company wanted the ordinance submitted to a referendum vote this fall. Mayor Johnson said he favored a referendum, but on condition that it was broad enough to settle the question decisively for or against the old company, and that the company would agree to be bound by the referendum. This the company refused to do.

It is the plan of Mayor Johnson to make the three-cent fare lines the nucleus of a larger system which will displace the old company as fast as its grants expire.

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### AN IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN ISSUE.

A remarkable situation has developed in the congressional campaign. In 174 congressional districts the Republican nominees oppose the re-establishment of a direct vote in the people for public questions, and the Democratic opponents champion it. For the first time since the War of the Revolution the question of self-government is actually a live issue and can easily become paramount. If in one-third of these districts the majority rule cause prevails, the next House will be Democratic.

The issue has been raised by the questioning of candidates by the National Federation for People's Rule, representing organized farmers and business interests, with the questions endorsed by the American Federation of Labor and the Labor Representation Committee of the American Federation of Labor.

Heretofore the difficulty in each congressional campaign has been to bring forward the national issues demanded by the organizations that do not make the nominations or party platforms—organizations demanding the termination of machine rule and the re-establishment of self-government. That problem has been solved. All the nominees have been questioned, and each one notified that a refusal to reply in ten days would be a negative to the questions and would be so reported to the newspapers and non-partisan organizations.

The questions to candidates this year are as follows:

If the electors will select you to represent them, will

you faithfully work and vote for the immediate enactment of a statute to establish a system of direct voting on public questions through—

(1) The Advisory Initiative, to apply to questions of interstate commerce, civil service, immigration, trial by jury or any modification of the law of injunction, eight-hour day in government contract work, and the submission of constitutional amendments for the initiative and referendum, election of United States Senators by the people, and election of fourth-class postmasters by the patrons of each office; and

(2) The Advisory Referendum, to apply to laws of Congress and measures passed by either House? (Suggestions for said systems are set forth in the accompanying bill.)

This program for a direct vote on public questions is not new in principle, being merely a return to the essential features of the system that existed previous to the rise of the convention some eighty years ago. The voters used to instruct at will and by direct vote. This they did at town meetings in rural New England, and elsewhere through mass meetings. And, besides, the candidates for Congress were pledged by districts instead of by machine-rule and State and national conventions, as is now the case.

The Federalist party opposed the use of this direct-vote system, and were at once ousted from power, and their odious Alien and Sedition laws were repealed. The party died nationally in 1817, since which time no one in public life has openly opposed majority rule until the questioning of candidates was instituted in recent years. Last year in Ohio, for example, there was a demand by the non-partisan forces for the election of a legislature that would submit a constitutional amendment for the termination of machine rule, in other words, for the initiative and referendum. The Democrats declared for it in their State platform, and when the nominees of the parties were questioned the Democrats pledged, while most of the Republicans refused. The attitude of candidates was published in the papers. When the voters went into the booths the intelligent and open-minded ones scratched the autocratic Republicans, and wrote in the names of pledged Democrats; and this was done so extensively that the Democratic representation in the State Senate was increased from 4 to 19—an increase of 475 per cent. In the House the percentage of gain was nearly as great. The Democrats had a tie vote in the Senate, and two-thirds were pledged to submit the constitutional amendment. Anything like this gain in national affairs this year will give the Democrats a big majority in the national House.

The Southern Democrats as well as the Northern ones are kindly disposed to the majority rule cause. It is declared for in the national platform and in strong terms; it was the main plank in Jefferson's platform; and since the death of the autocratic Federalist party no one in public life has openly opposed it, as has been pointed out. Although the Democratic nominees in the South are nearly all as good as elected, twenty-four have signed the pledge to work and vote for the immediate re-establishment of a national direct-vote system for the eight topics above mentioned.

GEORGE H. SHIBLEY.