

spread among his neighbors the news of the light he had seen. Dr. Beeler's friends of Hamilton say of that city that it "probably has more Single Taxers than any other in Ohio, due largely to Dr. Beeler." The Democratic "Journal" says that "he observed the trend of events and human progress with a keenness and an accuracy of thought that was a delight to listen to," and "he always had a reason for his views;" while the Republican "News" describes him as a man "essentially modest," but "strong and positive," to whom "humanity was his first interest," who was "actively, sympathetically and intelligently interested" in social questions, and that in the discussions at his store during "all the years it was a favorite resort of his coterie of friends," there "was nothing superficial." If that could only be said of all such discussions!

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### Civic Engineering.

Professor Lewis J. Johnson, of the technical department of Harvard University, and a distinguished expert and leader in reinforced concrete construction since his designing of the stadium at Cambridge, has invented the new and good name of "civic engineering" for a new and good thing which he proposes—"constructive political science." The suggestion was made by Prof. Johnson in a letter to the Engineering News of August 25 last. Here is his interpretation of the first law of the constructive science of "civic engineering" as he sees it:

The people must rule—by indirect control so long as that suffices, and, that failing, by regular and orderly direct control to such extent and to such degree of detail as may be required for complete success.

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Prof. Johnson's indefinite allusion to the Initiative, Referendum, Recall, and allied machinery for popular government, as an elementary law of Civic Engineering, is doubtless due in part to the habitual caution of a conscientious expert whose errors, if he makes any, may cause the collapse of a gigantic bridge or the crumbling of massive walls; but it is in greater part, probably, an indication of the good natured deference of an Eastern professor who knows the whole country, to the provincial prejudices that envelope the Atlantic intellect. In that part of his letter in which he gives testimony, Prof. Johnson unreservedly cites the experience of the commission-governed cities of the West and interior South, all the characteristics which, "from the Initiative, Referendum and Recall to systematic publicity and the small council, operate directly toward

popular supremacy in fact," discouraging "assaults upon the public welfare," and encouraging "loyal public service," and thereby tending "constantly to keep the public interest not only supreme but unassailed." He advises "any one wishing to study what is probably the most perfect piece of machinery to this end" to "turn to the charter under which Grand Junction, Col., is now living," one of the "distinctive features" of which "preferential voting—a workable scheme for dispensing with primaries and securing elections in the interest of the majority—has with little modification been embodied in the proposed new charter for Buffalo, already approved by popular vote in that city" (vol. xii, p. 1091). Proceeding with his primer lesson in Civic Engineering, Prof. Johnson says:

The Denver elections of last May show still further the value of means of popular control suited to the magnitude of the task. Denver, in that election, had the chance by direct popular vote to settle each of a series of twenty-one questions. The voters had the incentive of knowing that as they voted so it would be. Measures were for once disentangled from candidates, from parties, and from one another. Here was a chance for intelligent action. It was fully improved. Despite the lavish use of money and all else that great wealth and the united political machines could do to mislead—and they did much—the people adopted each of the six measures designed for their welfare, and rejected all of the fifteen which were not so designed. Much more to the same purport might be cited from American experience and on a State-wide scale, as in Oregon, not to mention the even better established Swiss results of direct popular control.

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### "Made in Germany."

The daily papers told of an incident last week of the deepest import to minds that are watching the evolution of democracy: "Scores injured by the Berlin police—'Bloodhounds!' shriek crowds as Von Jagow's men ride them down. In spite of the strictness with which the cordons were maintained, the strikers and their sympathizers held meetings at the street corners, which in several instances caused bloody fights." It is not much, the whole item; but let your mind wander over to England and look at that clock made in Germany. The words "Made in Germany" have a peculiar significance over there. To the less fortunate men, the words mean hatred, impotent rage; to the more fortunate—those who do not depend upon daily wages, and are trying to think out what it is that is wrong but do not think that the root of a thing is the place to hunt—those words have meant much: that Germany has discipline which England should copy; that

because an enlightened despotism is ruling in Germany, behold Germany beats all the other nations in industry; that this same enlightened despotism has by *Protection*, flooded the free market of England with "things made in Germany." And if one ask about the German wage earners, one is told that they are *all right*, far more prosperous on the whole, than are the English of that class. And the navy of that country is growing, and its enlightened despotism is needing more land. Therefore, that England may not be ruined, she must increase her tariff, strengthen her navy, and let Baden Powell drill the babies so they will grow up able to kill scientifically and with subtlety. Let us cast no slur upon those who hold these ideas. They may be better individuals than we are and quite as sincere, though they have got gummed up in details before examining the roots of the situation. But the dreadful Berlin incident, taken into consideration with like incidents of the year, indicates that there are people in Germany opposed to this benevolent despotism. If these Berlin crowds, understanding discipline as we of the West do not begin to, hazard destruction by the police, the Goddess of Discontent must be urging them on toward greater freedom. Not even under the military discipline of Germany, can the doctrine that government should be by the consent of the governed, be changed to government for the benefit of the governed, without disappointment and protest. Here seems to be the beginning of the end of one of the strongest arguments in behalf of protection, with which so many British people have been dazed.

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### THE DES MOINES PLAN IN OPERATION.\*

The Commission form of municipal government obliterates ward lines, ignores party politics, and abolishes legislative, executive and judicial distinctions.

It substitutes a board consisting of the Mayor and four Commissioners, who manage the affairs of the city as a board of directors would manage the business of a bank or of any other large corporation. They are invested with all the powers of city government, and are elected by the people of the whole city.

These five men divide the duties of the city government among themselves into five departments: Public Affairs, Accounts and Finances, Public

\*This editorial is by the Mayor of Des Moines, Iowa, whose functions under the Des Moines plan of Commission Government are those of Superintendent of the Department of Public Affairs.

Safety, Streets and Public Improvements, and Parks and Public Property. They then elect all the subordinate officers necessary for the city business, such as Chief of Police, Police Judge, City Clerk, City Engineer, City Treasurer, City Auditor, etc. These subordinate officers may be discharged at any time. All other subordinates, except common laborers, are selected under civil service rules administered by a Civil Service Commission, and are removable only for misconduct, or lack of attention to duties, or activity in political matters.

The four Commissioners and the Mayor act as the administrative heads of their respective departments. They also constitute the Council and as such legislate for the city.

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These five Councilmen under the Des Moines Plan are elected for a period of two years, and in the following manner: Any citizen who secures the signatures of twenty-five voters vouching for his character may become a candidate for Mayor or Commissioner. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes for Mayor at the primary are the candidates for Mayor at the election; the eight receiving the highest number of votes for Commissioner are the final candidates for Commissioners. At the election, which occurs two weeks later, the candidate for Mayor who receives the highest number of votes becomes Mayor, and the four candidates for Commissioner who receive the highest number of votes become Commissioners.

At their first meeting, those five elect the subordinate city officers, and the new Council is then ready to conduct the business of the city.

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It will be seen that directness and simplicity are the main characteristics of the Des Moines plan of Commission government.

The great purposes are to make the city officials feel responsive to public opinion, and to enable them to make themselves efficient in administration.

To carry out those two fundamental ideas, two other great principles have dictated nearly all the details of the charter—namely: to confer upon the governing body great power, and to hold it strictly responsible for right uses of its power. *Publicity* and *efficiency* are the watchwords of the Des Moines plan.

Candidates must make a public statement of their campaign expenses; there can be no secret meetings of the City Council; every ordinance