

which not they, but others may enjoy." Have we found that "somewhere"?

EDWARD HOWELL PUTNAM.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE REFERENDUM AS A FIFTH WHEEL.

W. W. Buchanan of Winnipeg, Canada, who has been a public advocate of Direct Legislation for twenty years and of Singletax for thirty years, at a banquet of the Direct Legislation League at Winnipeg on May 9, put one over on the Premier of his Province with an illustration that will live. R. P. Roblin, the Premier, had stated that the Referendum, if not absolutely mischievous, would be as useless as the fifth wheel on a coach, and Mr. Buchanan replied:

"I thank the Premier for a thought-starter toward a splendid illustration. The referendum is certainly like the fifth wheel of a coach, and the use of the maxim in this connection indicates that the Premier is easily ten years behind the time. The coach of today is a motor car, and the man found fifty miles from his garage without a fifth wheel on his automobile would not require a commission in lunacy to help him to gain admission to an insane asylum. Time and the automobile have made the old maxim as obsolete as a wooden gunboat. It is true that we do not change the mechanism of the car, nor put the fifth wheel upon an axle to increase wear and friction. We strap it on behind and cherish the ardent hope that it will stay there. We do not want to use it—until something goes wrong, and then we know where it is, and we are not left in the mud, or sitting by the side of the road, where the races of men go by, to sneer at us. The Referendum will not interfere with the legislative or administrative processes of government, unless something goes wrong, and then it can be used to keep the coach of state moving splendidly forward on the road of human progress."

S. S.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, June 18, 1912.

The Republican National Convention.

In the Coliseum at Chicago the national Republican convention met on the 18th for the purpose of formulating the party platform and nominating candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States, to be voted for at the election on the 5th day of November next. [See current volume, page 563.]



Prior to the assembling of this convention, the

national committee of the Republican party had been in session for more than a week adjusting preliminary details. Principal among the details with which it was charged was the decision of contests for seats as delegates. Under the rules of the party, the decisions of this committee are not final, but under the present circumstances they seemed on all hands to be probably final in effect. For as the temporary roll of the convention is thus made up, and as the convention organizes on the basis of this roll, all its subsequent proceedings may turn out to have been dictated by those preliminary decisions of the national committee. For illustration: Suppose a close race between rival candidates for the Presidential nomination; suppose contests which if decided one way would give to one candidate a majority of the delegates on the temporary roll; but if decided the other way would give it to the other candidate. In those circumstances the faction having a majority on the temporary roll could seat its own choice for temporary chairman of the convention, pack the credentials committee of the convention so as to secure confirmation of the previous decisions of the national committee, name its own candidate for permanent chairman, determine the factional color of all committees, and finally name its own candidates for President and Vice-President—all by the narrow majority given it originally by the national committee's pre-convention decisions on questions of contested seats for delegates. This is what could happen, subject of course to many variations in detail; and this is what the Roosevelt faction asserts that the Taft faction intended to have happen. When the national committee closed its work on the 15th it had completed the temporary roll, which indicated the following distribution of delegates: Taft, 563; Roosevelt, 466; La Follette, 36; Cummins, 10; Hughes, 1; Lincoln, 2; a majority of 24 for Taft.



According to the Roosevelt view, the preparation of this temporary roll showed a bold attempt by the Taft faction to make the convention misrepresent the party. The substance of their argument is that the national committee is a hold-over body, appointed at the previous quadrennial convention (which is true except as to a few vacancies); that most of the members of this committee, such as Crane of Massachusetts and Penrose of Pennsylvania, were defeated both personally and as to their "standpat" policies by the voters of the Republican party at the recent primaries (which is true as to those Taft leaders, and is probably true altogether); that these discredited representatives have decided contests with manifest factional partisanship in favor of Taft by a solid "steam roller" vote of about 36—a majority of something like 20—regardless of the