

The Public

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EDITORIAL

The Progressive Victory in Ohio.

Outside of Ohio the significance of Herbert S. Bigelow's election as president of the Constitutional Convention of that State, may not be very clearly understood. Even in Ohio itself there are many good people who have so far lost their way in pious contemplation of the merits of their own particular reforms, as to have turned their backs upon the true way for getting them democratically which Bigelow's election opens up. His election means that the "gateway" principle he has worked for in Ohio these ten years back has triumphed—unless the forces of plutocratic reaction, which have thus far been defeated in their opposition, succeed later on in their game of "playing both ends against the middle."



More distinctly and influentially than any other person, Mr. Bigelow represents the movement for the full Initiative and Referendum in Ohio. Through his efforts, more than any other one person's, a convention the majority of whose delegates are pledged to this reform was elected, over desperate opposition by the Ohio State Board of Commerce, which contributed the services of its president, Allen Ripley Foote, one of the slickest corporation lobbyists that ever invaded a legislature. Mr. Foote and his party were defeated at the polls, whereupon they set about nullifying the vote at the polls by electing a re-

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actionary as president of the Convention. In this battle also they were defeated, thanks to 53 progressive delegates who understood the situation and held together until enough progressives who didn't understand it came over and made the necessary majority. It now remains for Foote's Ohio State Board of Commerce, by subtle convention tactics, to dish the Initiative and Referendum in the framing of the new Constitution if they can. For this job they are financially "heeled;" for in soliciting funds from Ohio corporations for the campaign at the polls they provided for a percentage of deferred payments, collectable after the assembling of the convention. But Mr. Bigelow has probably spoiled their plans. His speech on the question of appointing committees inspired all the progressive delegates with confidence in him; his redemption of the promises of that speech will no doubt confirm their confidence; and as the progressives of both parties and all factions make, when united, a large majority of the convention, the game of the Ohio State Board of Commerce has probably been played to a disastrous close.



The prime object of that body is to defeat the Initiative and Referendum, to the end that Ohio may have a "representative" government, representing the Interests and not the people. This alone ought to be warning enough to all genuine reformers in Ohio. Let them beware the enemy that crawls upon its belly and gives wise advice about apples. The chief reason for opposition to the Initiative and Referendum by the Ohio State Board of Commerce, et al., is the very reason why every sincere reformer should advocate it now, even at the expense of delaying action on his own reform. With the Initiative and Referendum in their Constitution, the people of Ohio can so control their representatives as at any time to get what a majority of the people want and to prevent what a majority do not want. Is anyone in Ohio asking for more or willing to take less than this? If there is, watch him.



Judicial Usurpation.

There is a judge in Ohio who looks at this distance like a guide worthy to be followed. Many times have we noted in his decisions evidence of a clear democratic perception that the judicial bench is a tribunal, not a throne, and that judges are not royal personages but plain men engaged in performing one of the functions of citizenship. A recent decision of his is typical.

In setting aside an arbitrary receivership this judge took occasion to say:

The usurpation of powers that do not belong to them and the continued interference with the administration of law by judges and courts of equity, bring our courts into disrepute. Actions of this kind by courts of equity and the granting of improper injunctions have been the cause of much criticism by the people recently. Judges sitting as chancellors have usurped powers that do not belong to them, and are continually interfering with the administration of law.

The people of Ohio ought to learn more about a judge of theirs whose judicial service is animated by this democratic and truly law-abiding spirit. In Cincinnati they know him well as Judge Gorman.



Women in Public Life.

"What I hope to do is to go among the teachers, meet them at their work, find out their ideas and, while helping them as I may, get from them ideas that will help me in administering the schools." This is the declared policy of Harriet Keeler, the new Superintendent of public schools in Cleveland—the second woman for that position in a large city, Ella Flagg Young of Chicago being the first. It is the same policy that Mrs. Young has successfully introduced in the Chicago schools: leadership instead of drivership. Yet the "business school boards" of Chicago kept the school system demoralized for years with their stubborn efforts to factoryize the schools by drivership. Cleveland's adoption of the later and better Chicago policy of putting a woman in charge, is significant of a growing realization of the need of the feminine spirit and influence in public affairs.



Socialism in Schenectady.

Like a breath of fresh air in an overheated prison cell, is Mayor Lunn's first inaugural address—George R. Lunn, the first Socialist mayor of any New York city. His suggestions for immediate action are practical and sensible, and the spirit of the whole message is refreshing. "To us," this vigorous message concludes, "government is not a mere routine to be followed more or less mechanically; it is a great problem to be solved. We look upon government not as the continuation of a precedent or as an adjunct to private business. For us, government is the instrument through which wrong can be righted, poverty abolished, life made secure, cities healthful, citizens happy." That civic gospel must sound strangely in the ears of spoilsmen, franchisers