

How can any thoughtful citizen read that editorial advice to the people of California without realizing the vast difference for the better between the new way under Initiative and Referendum and the old way under delegated authority? Compare this campaign for Constitution-making in California with that in Ohio, if you wish to realize the difference. Progressivism may be defeated in California, but if defeated the reason will be that the people as a whole are not progressive; but it may be defeated in Ohio, no matter how progressive the people, merely because prostitutes of Privilege know how to get delegates and how to handle them when they get them, and also how to get slush funds and other help from "good people" with which to do it all.

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The Court of Public Opinion.

The noted Judge Grosscup of Chicago formally announced his intention last week to resign from the Federal bench at an early day. One of his reasons, apparently the decisive one, he expressed carefully in these words:

The world, politically, is trying to catch up with the world's radically changed economic conditions. The "formative" period is approaching. Next year's Presidential election will, I believe, be the last one on the old lines. And the settlement for the future will not come through the courts of law, but through the court of public opinion. I wish no office—expect never again to hold office—but I wish greater freedom than the Bench gives to do my part in this court of public opinion.

Judge Grosscup's career after resignation would have been as interesting to sociological observers as the peculiarities of a new star to astronomers, but he has decided now *not* to resign!

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"Good Men in Office."

The Boston Common is an excellent editorial antidote to the notion, still prevalent in the East but well out of the fight in the West, that all we need to make government good is to elect good men to office. This plan has been pretty well "tried out" in the West, and with no good results other than a sort of "whitened sepulcher" effect; and experience with it in the East, however, good it may seem there, doesn't look so good at this distance. Wherefore we say that the Boston Common is a good antidote in the East; it is **not** fooled by the plutocratic slogan of "good men in office." "Good men don't necessarily mean good measures," it warns its readers, for "many good men stand for very bad measures." So The Common advocates Direct Legislation, and that it

does it vigorously this quotation shows: "When the people can vote measures up or down on their merits it won't matter so much whether the men in the representative assemblies are good, bad or average—*there can be no betrayal of the public welfare without the people knowing it.* And they can quickly correct their own mistakes."

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Charles Battell Loomis.

This literary humorist who died at Hartford, Connecticut, on the 23d, leaves behind him more than an accumulation of books bearing his name as author. He was a humorist who, like Mark Twain, was also a philosopher and of the sincerely democratic variety. While amusing his readers he probed unobtrusively and tenderly for the democratic in their own minds and hearts.

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Land Value Taxation in Rhode Island.

In the line of the Oregon pamphlet comparing taxes under present taxation with probable taxes under land value taxation,* but concentrated on one city and greatly expanded in detail, is an Eastern pamphlet of some half a hundred pages prepared by John Z. White and published by the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association of Providence. This pamphlet classifies by name all the taxpayers of the city of Woonsocket, Rhode Island. In one class, 1,851 in number, are named those taxpayers who would save money by the land value tax; in a second class, 28, and a third, 30, are those whose taxes would be raised less than \$1 and \$2 each, respectively; and in the fourth, 23, and the fifth, 34, are those whose taxes would be raised from \$2 to \$3 and from \$3 to \$5 each, respectively. There is a list also of those, 29 in number, whose taxes would be raised from 1 per cent to 10 per cent each. The above facts are more especially interesting to the individual tax payers of Woonsocket, except as they are suggestive to the tax payers of all other Rhode Island towns and cities; but here are some percentages of general significance and interest:

Of the total taxes, vacant land bears.....	4.75%
Of the total taxes, improved land bears.....	24.22%
Of the total taxes, improvements bear.....	53.46%
Of the total taxes, personalty bears.....	17.55%

Those figures are worth thinking over by all industrious taxpayers who pay for making land speculation profitable to the non-industrious. Another valuable contribution to the statistics of land value taxation, this pamphlet shows in much greater

*See The Public, volume xiii, page 843, and current volume, page 844.

detail than any previous publication, what all the others show, that land value taxation, even in its first applications and only as a fiscal reform, is of greatest benefit to the greatest number and that the industrious are the classes benefited by it.

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A Safe Universe Ought to Be Grateful.

Notwithstanding the failure of William Randolph Hearst to carry the Canadian elections, readers of the Hearst papers are kept abreast of the news that he continues, nevertheless, to run the universe.

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SNAPSHOTS OF A PRESIDENT ON THE ROAD.

One or another of three views with regard to President Taft is entertained by almost everybody.

Some believe that he is a big, smiling, good-natured "chump," who has filled his cabinet with grafters and is taking their advice.

Others believe that he is entirely honest but was brought up in an atmosphere of wealth, surrounded by men who had secured their fortunes by exploiting labor, by buying franchises, and by securing the appointment of judges to protect their interests, and that he honestly believes the best form of government is a government of, for and by the corporations, and the only thing sacred under our civilization is property, and that judges are sacred because they are guardians of property rather than guardians of human rights, whereas the people are incapable of self-government and unsafe to decide whether a judge shall be recalled or not, because it tends to mob rule. In other words, that the citizens of this country are unreliable and irresponsible, and that power should be as far as possible removed from their control. Entertaining those views honestly, the President conceives, in the estimation of these apologists, that it is his absolute duty as President to select judges who will carry out such views, to pack the Supreme Court in the interest of the corporations, and to assist the rich to become richer in order that they may bestow charities. A benevolent feudalism is his ideal form of civilization, according to this estimate.

There is still a third class of people who regard him as utterly dishonest, as absolutely corrupt, as aiming to use his great position as President of the United States to enrich his family by granting concessions and privileges, with his brother as a go-between, to the rich and great combinations of this country; and they instance the fact that as Roosevelt's secretary of war he went to Rome and

purchased of the Pope, or the Catholic Church, a vast area in the Philippine Islands for which he paid several millions of dollars, at \$18.50 an acre, and after he became President sold to the Havemeyers, or the sugar trust, 65,000 acres of the very choicest of these lands at \$6.50 an acre, his brother Charles acting as the go-between, and Wickershams, his attorney general (who before he became attorney general was attorney for the sugar trust), giving his sanction as the law officer of the government. These critics also cite the instance of Controller Bay in Alaska, where President Taft released several thousand acres from a forest reservation in order that the lands might be entered by Ryan and the Guggenheims as terminals for their coal roads, giving them a monopoly of this entrance to Alaska that should have been retained by the public. He also gave them notice in advance as to when he would open this country, and they had their men on the ground the very day that he signed the proclamation in Washington, so that no one else could possibly interfere.

These three views, one or another, seem to be the views which, on the whole, are entertained by the people of this country. Undoubtedly they make President Taft a typical Standpat Republican candidate for re-election. Therefore the great newspapers owned by the great combinations are now declaring that there is no question about his nomination by acclamation.

R. F. PETTIGREW.

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A FINANCIAL WATERMELON PATCH.

An analysis of the first 40 annual reports of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company, filed in compliance with the New York statutes, shows that a *clear net profit* of a fraction over 24 cents remained to be divided among the owners of the bonds and stock, *from every dollar of income* from all sources during the entire 39 years and 8 months of operations covered by those reports.

Aggregating the operating expenses during the first 40 years of this company's corporate existence—

included in which expenses are—
liberal amounts alleged to have been expended for repairs to—

road bed,
rolling stock and
buildings—

together with prodigious sums reported to have been paid for printing and