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EDITORIAL

The Ohio Constitution.

In less than four weeks the Ohio special election on Constitutional amendments comes off. Of these amendments there are 41, each to be voted upon separately and each one to stand or fall by its own majority. Among those of general interest the following stand out conspicuously: Woman suffrage,* municipal home rule,† and the Initiative and Referendum.‡ The election will take place on the 3d of September; and upon those three proposals the voters of Ohio will then have their opportunity to put their State at the head of the Progressive column.



The woman suffrage proposal is in the form of a simple amendment to the existing Constitution. If adopted it will strike out the word "white" and the word "male" from voting qualifications, thereby and with the aid of an appropriate pronoun altering the clause on those qualifications so as to read:

Every citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of the State one year next preceding the election, and of the county, township or ward in which he or she resides such time as may be provided by law, shall have the qualifications of an elector and be entitled to vote at all elections.

For municipal home rule it is provided:

Municipal corporations with a population of 5,000

*See Public of June 14, page 555.

†See Public of April 26, page 397.

‡See Public of April 5, pages 318, 319.

or more are cities and all others are villages. They shall respectively have all powers of self government not in conflict with general laws. They may acquire, construct, own, lease and operate local public utilities, subject to approval by local referendum. They may make their own charters.



There are two kinds of Initiative, legislative and Constitutional. The Constitutional Initiative provides for amending the Constitution upon petition of 10 per cent of the voters, the total to include 5 per cent of the voters in each of half the counties of the State. The legislative Initiative provides for the popular initiation of laws, subject to the Constitution, through—

a petition to the legislature signed by 3 per cent of the voters, the total to include $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the voters in each of half the counties of the State. If the legislature adopts the law proposed, either as petitioned for or amended, it is subject to Referendum. If the legislature refuses or neglects to adopt the law precisely as proposed, it goes to popular vote if demanded by an additional 3 per cent of the voters, the grand total to include 3 per cent of the voters of each of half the counties. No Initiated measure sanctioned by popular vote shall be subject to veto, nor to nullification for defective petitions.

The Referendum on laws enacted by the legislature requires a petition of 6 per cent of the voters, inclusive of 3 per cent of the voters in each of half the counties.



All the reasonable indications are that these amendments will be adopted. It is to be hoped, however, that no voter in Ohio who favors them will neglect to give them the benefit of his ballot.



Legislative Experts.

Nearly all the literature and stump speaking against the Initiative is stuffed—"stuffed" is the appropriate word—with superstitions about the importance of leaving the making of laws to experts. The assumption is that legislators put study into the subjects before them, whereas the people in making laws directly would botch them. But the truth about this is that Initiated laws are more carefully framed by experts than legislative laws are; and it is reasonable to expect that they would be. When bills are ground out by legislatures, even though originally drawn in good faith by competent experts, they are very likely to come from the law-making machine with jokers in them—jokers put there by different experts for the purpose of vitiating the measures. But when

bills are Initiated, they are drawn by the best obtainable experts in sympathy with their purpose, and they cannot thereafter be tampered with by legislative "experts." It is safe to say that wherever Initiated laws have been adopted they have been subjected, before the signing of the petitions for them, to scrutiny by several experts acting in good faith and free from entangling connections with experts not acting in good faith. On the point of expertism in the framing of statutes, direct-legislation has legislature-legislation "beat a mile," for all honest law-making purposes.



Hearst's Campaign Arrangements.

Hearst's newspaper contributions to the contest against tariff-protected interests in the Presidential campaign are interesting. In his papers, according to their formal announcement, Candidate Taft (protectionist) is to be championed by his own manager; Candidate Roosevelt (protectionist), by a member of the Hearst staff whose convictions on anything are not conspicuous; and Candidate Wilson (tariff for revenue only), by the Hearst papers (protection) in their own organic individuality. Mr. Taft may be grateful and Mr. Roosevelt curious, but it is up to Mr. Wilson to pray for deliverance.



Kent's Congressional Candidacy.

Under depressions from illness and from combating frivolous legal proceedings instituted by the Taft administration to "get even," Congressman William Kent of California recently expressed his intention of declining to run for public office again, but he has since reconsidered that decision and issued an address to the voters of his district. He does not enter the primary, however, as he did two years ago. He runs by petition as a Progressive, appealing to progressive Democrats as well as progressive Republicans. His address, confirmed as it is by his official record, should assure his re-election. There are few Congressional districts in the United States where such declarations as these of Kent's would not be as invigorating as fresh air:

In my first campaign I promised to vote and work against special privilege. I promised to cast a careful conscientious vote on every public question regardless of partisanship. I promised that I would not be bound by caucus against my platform and my conscience. I have kept the faith. I have been opposed to extravagant, wasteful and improper expenditures by the Federal government, realizing that the funds must be procured from the pockets of