The Commoner.

some of its progressive features may be thus

Initiative and referendum. Nomination of all state, county, district and township officers by primaries.

Prohibition of succession in state offices. Submission of the probibition question to the people of the whole state.

Elective state corporation commission.

Two-cent passenger fares. Forbidding railway companies from owning any productive agency of a natural commodity Fellow servant law.

Prohibiting corporations from owning more land than is absolutely necessary in the operation of their business.

Prohibition of issuance of watered stock; books of corporations made subject to inspection at all times.

Appointment of commission to negotiate purchase of the segregated mineral lands in Indian territory, valued at many millions of dollars.

Fixing legal rate of interest at six per cent and contract rate at ten per cent.

Compulsory and separate school system. Labor and arbitration commission. Commission of charities and corrections.

Agricultural commission. Oil, gas and mines commission.

Requiring majority vote to amend the constitution.

In that is not one line that any, except the servitors and sycophants of monopolistic corporations, can take exception to. It is a straightforward declaration for the protection of the people's rights, by the people's own votes. Yet a republican congressman from Indiana, some two thousand miles away, comes to Washington to plead against presidential approval of the Oklahoman's own action. Why?

If admitted Oklahoma will enter the union with 800,000 inhabitants. It has now a greater population than at least fifteen other states, some of which have been members of the sisterhood of states for a century. Rhode Island, one of the original thirteen, has a population only permitting two congressmen; Colorado, "the centennial state," admitted in 1876, has but three.

Five congressmen, two senators and at the appointed time fourteen votes in the electoral college make up a political prize worth winning. Is it possible that the excitement of the Indiana politician about the "heresies" of the constitution, and the hesitation of the administration are at all due to partisan considerations?

Chairman Griggs of the democratic congressional committee is confident that, if admitted, the state will be carried for the democratic party. In an interview with me the other night he pointed out that in the constitutional convention ninety-eight out of one hundred and twelve delegates were democrats, six republicans, and two independents. Wherefore he has high hopes of final success, and is asking for dollar subscriptions to a fund to secure publicity and political activity when the election shall be held.

Probably the figures that enthused Griggs, affrighted Watson and the administration. But both parties might remember that Colorado, admitted by democratic votes in 1876, gave its electoral vote to Hayes and thereby contributed to his installation as president.

So let an intelligent and reasoning people set aside the question of partisan advantage and ask themselves-and the administration-these questions:

When a community of 800,000 people made up of American citizens gathered from every state of the union asks for statehood, shall it not be granted?

When it has adopted, through delegates chosen of all the people, a constitution, must that instrument be subjected to the august approval of a politician from Indiana, or an attorney general, not unfriendly to railroads, from WILLIS J. ABBOTT. Maryland?

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

I haven't much faith in the man who complains Of the work he has chosen to do, He's lazy, or else he's deficient in brains, And-may be-a hypocrite, too. He's likely to cheat and he's likely to rob; Away with the man who finds fault with his job.

But give me the man with the sun in his face, And the shadows all dancing behind; Who can meet his reverses with calmness and

grace. And never forgets to be kind; For whether he's wielding a scepter or swab, I have faith in the man who's in love with his job. -John L. Shroy in Lippincott's.

Initiative and Referendum

Herbert S. Bigelow has written, for the Ohio Direct Legislation League, an interesting pamphlet showing the growth and benefits of the initiative and referendum. For the benefit of those who have been deceived, Mr. Bigelow describes the initiative and referendum in this way:

It is proposed that this power of direct legislation shall be exercised through what are known as the initiative and referendum. Under the initiative it is provided that if the representatives refuse to pass a certain law, this law may be enacted by a direct vote of the people, provided there is sufficient demand for the taw to cause a reasonable percentage of the electors to petition for its submission. Under the referendum it is provided that no act passed by the legislature shall take effect until the expiration of a designated time, and that any law may be vetoed by a direct vote of the people provided there is sufficient opposition to the law to cause, within the time designated, a reasonable percentage of the electors to petition for its submission.

Thus it is made optional with the people whether or not they will take the trouble to bring questions to a direct vote. Under this system they have the convenience of a representative government, but when in their opinion their government ceases to represent them, they may enact or repeal laws by a direct vote at the polls, thus exercising directly the law-making function.

If it were made necessary to get the popular sanction for an P's, the convenience of the representative system would be sacrificed. But it is an abuse of this system that any law should be passed in defiance of public sentiment. To secure the convenience of the representative system and yet escape its abuses the optional initiative and referendum are needed, whereby the people can leave everything to their representatives if they wish, but do not surrender the right to participate in legislation directly when they desire.

Mr. Bigelow gives an illustration from the experience of Uncinnati. Read the following:

Cincinnati is unique among the cities of America in that she is the owner of a steam railroad. The history of this railroad furnishes a most significant example of the use of the referendum. In 1896 the politicians resolved to sell this property. They had to proceed under an enabling act which the Ohio legislature had passed ten years before. The Cincinnati council took the preliminary steps and the road was to go for a song.

But it chanced that the legislature had placed in the enabling act the provision that the sale, to be valid, must be ratified by a direct vote of the people. The vote was taken and the road was saved.

Subsequently the people ratified a sixtyyear lease of the road. What that one referendum vote was worth to the city of Cincinnati may be determined by a comparison of the two contracts-the one which the people rejected and the one which they accepted. A member of the board of sinking fund trustees. Mr. George W. Harris, was asked for an opinion as to what the 1896 referendum saved the city. In reply Mr. Harris made an analysis of these contracts in a letter which is appended to the present pamphlet. Mr. Harris' conclusion is that this referendum in one hundred years' time will have saved the city \$222,000,000. Two and a quarter million a year for 100 years—this is what the politicians would have squandered if that enabling act had not contained a referendum clause.

These are startling figures and they have a profound lesson. The people of Cincinnati had no constitutional right to vote on the sale of their railroad. That was a right conferred upon them by an act of the legislature. The legislature might have omitted this referendum feature. In that case the people would have had no power to prevent the sale of the road.

Any Ohio legislature could pass a law empowering the Cincinnati counsel to sell the road without the consent of the people. Laws are now on the statute books under which other property, such as franchise grants in the city streets, may not only be sold, but given away, and the people have no voice in the matter.

Mr. Bigelow concludes his interesting pamphlet in this way:

The business of the corporation lobbyist and the legislative blackmailer is to secure bad laws and obstruct good ones. By the referendum the people could defeat bad laws. By the

initiative they could overcome the obstruction to good laws. Thus direct legislation would of necessity discourage corruption and increase the effectiveness of good citizenship. This is the unfalling testimony of experience in America as well as elsewhere. There is ample reason for the faith of the editor of the New York Independent, who said, in the issue of November 22, 1906: "In our opinion the initiative and referendum is the most important 'next step' in political reform in this country. Its advent ought to do wonders in breaking up corrupt political machines and preventing the passage of vicious legislation, and under it real leaders of the people will find it easy to arise on real

Citizens everywhere have awakened with alarm to a realization of the abuses of representative government. Where shall men "turn for the civic virtue to withstand the enemies of the republic? The advocates of direct legislation say: "Back to the people."

SPECIAL OFFER

Each of the following have sent in yearly subscriptions to The Commoner in number as follows: U. G. Nicholson, Buffalo, O., 9; W. J. Smith, Ramona, I. T., 7; J. V. Cooke, Lexington, Mo., G; W. F. Helbling, Woodsfield, O., 6; John Lichty, Falls City, Neb., 6; W. S. Mizell, Mart, Tex., 8; E. A. Clark, San Francisco, Cal., 7: A. McCallen, Berkeley, Cal., 14; Edward Robertson, Medford, Ore., 6; J. F. Kenney, Okeene, Okla., 6; W. II. Granger, Ventura, Cal., 6; D. L. Hutson, Mongo, Ia., 7; J. B. Sommerville, Indianapolis, Ind., 10; John Witschy, Fairview, Kan., 8; E. Downey, West Side, Ia., 9; Wm. A. Waugh, Ona, W. Va., 6; R. G. Wilson, jr., Lees Summit, Mo., 18; Dr. J. G. Russell, Tucumcari, N. Mex., 7; R. B. Goar, Sentinel, Okla., 6; Wm. Kinsey, New Philadelphia, O., 6; E. M. Ellis, New Decatur, Ala., 6; J. D. Miller, Pueblo, Colo., 6; A. M. Sigley, Bristol, W. Va., 9; A. Voorhees, Weston, N. J., 11; A. Hersberger, Pinos Altos, N. Mex., 6; L. P. Custer, St. Louis, Mo., 8; Gustav Brecke, Milton, N. D., 6; Warren G. Brown, Whitefield, N. Ham., 22; J. M. Summers, Excelsior Springs, Mo., 6; W. J. Evans, Streatford, Ia., 6; S. L. Bassel, Lost Creek, W. Va., 7; Chas. W. Kirtley, Woodward, Ia., 6; David Grubb, Princeton, Ind., 6; Wm. Dils, Smithfield, Pa., 11; J. H. Dale, Boone, Ia., 6; John Donabue, Huntley, ill., 6; H. Snell, Wilcox, Neb., 10; S. W. Moon, Sutton, W. Va., 6; Chas. Wright, No. Manchester, Ind., 10; J. L. McGuire, Fayetteville, Ark., 7; W. W. Glesenkamp, Woodsfield, O., 6; H. A. Odden, Osage, Ia., 10; J. N. Walker, Bland, Va., 9.

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