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tion of political and social vitality. It is a spiritual more than a financial problem." Then he read:

"The hopelessness of the people (of Fribourg) has benumbed them. They present a placidity which nothing can arouse. It is only because of the popular inertia that the regime exists. Many like it because they are employed under it and many others because they hope to be. To allow a single man to have his will and a coterie of men to exercise it, is to deaden civilization and block progress. Public affairs should be the concern of all. Intelligent spirits must work for the good of the whole. In a healthy democracy no man should live upon it, but must take part in it."

"To take account of some material results," continued the doctor, laying aside the paper, "Python has in the establishment of public enterprises loaded the canton with a debt which will be a burden upon our people for half a century. It now stands at 1,000,000 francs for each 1,000 inhabitants, the largest per cent per inhabitant of any canton in Switzerland."

"But do you object to state ownership of public utilities?" I interrupted.

"Not at all. The objection lies in the fact that in addition to the really useful enterprises, which, if well conducted may be profitable to the state, and which are indeed a great success in other cantons, there have been started others not needed, which only serve to enrich clever speculators. The money to build these enterprises is largely borrowed abroad. It passes through Python's banks, and, although I could not prove it, it is morally certain that fat commissions are paid. The necessary legislation is rushed through the grand council under the spell of Python's 'little stick.'

"Here is another article in my paper in which I say, 'The notice of the last loan of 25,000,000 francs was given only two days before the vote was taken in the council and the people were not consulted. Speculators ask no questions concerning the social and economic advancement of our canton, but, caring only for their own welfare, advise projects which make them rich commissions.'

"Further than this," he continued, "when a public enterprise is undertaken we always find the real cost exceeding the original estimate. For example: the electrical plant was estimated at 3,000,000 francs and in the end it cost 12,000,000 francs. Moreover it can be affirmed

that in the building of this plant, the financiers and contractors bribed the government."

"But is Python a good manager? Do these institutions pay after they are established? A few business men of Switzerland have told me that Python was a progressive man."

"The strange part of it is that we do not know," responded the doctor. "No man can secure exact information as to the income of the canton from the bank 'De l'Etat.' The books are not at the disposal of the people and there are no reports upon the banks, water, electrical or other enterprises of the canton. We only know that the canton is burdened with a debt of 100,000,000 francs and that there is now talk of an additional loan of 30,000,000. Loans of this sort have been rapidly increasing during the past ten years."

He read again from the paper:

"So we see the general interests of the country made subservient to private business, and we have seen many radical co-patriots, whom we had a right to expect to work for social and democratic progress, throw aside personal honor and independence to purchase private gain at the price of their own self-respect and the general prosperity."

Someone came in to see the editor and as they talked I turned to the window overlooking a portion of the picturesque old city, founded 314 years before Columbus sailed westward. Up the street, a little way to the right stood the famous Cathedral of St. Nicholas (begun in 1283), with its great organ of over 7,000 pipes and over whose carved portal, as if petrified in stone, still live the theological ideas of heaven and hell which swayed the mediaeval world. In contrast there stands nearby a beautiful modern bank building and also a great suspension bridge 168 feet above the waters of the river Sarine, which flows in a horseshoe curve around the heart of the old part of the city. An interesting city is Fribourg, but one misses the progressive spirit of other Swiss cities equally fascinating and historic. Sanitary conditions are not so good; streets are not so clean; things in general are more unkempt; and I especially noted more ragged and dirty children, the wholesome appearance of which, in most Swiss cities, is a joy to the traveler. Thinking of these things as I watched the people pass by on the street below, I coupled my observations with the demand of the reformers that Fribourg be unshackled and left free to develop politically and economically along with her sister cantons. It was clearly a case of cause and effect evident to one who had eyes to see.

The visitor had gone and I turned to Dr. Gross with this question:

"I know enough about Python and his system. Now tell me what you propose to do about it. What do you advocate?"

"We work first to secure the referendum."

"Why?"

Again the file of papers was consulted, Dr. Gross explaining that he had written much upon that subject, and finally he selected the following in answer to my inquiry:

"We demand the initiative and referendum not as alms, but as a right. We must end the system which paralyzes political and social progress and establish one which will vitalize our citizenship and awaken their interest in government. All other cantons have direct legislation. Our canton has lived on under the old representative system and must be modified. Our constitution is unique in its construction; all power is vested in the grand council, elected every five years from seven districts. It elects our national representatives and sends them to Bern. The people have nothing to say. Nothing by the best; nothing for the people. The initiative and referendum are the two essential rights for the realization of true democracy. We must have them in Fribourg, and, as our government will not grant them, we must force it to do so. Why should the initiative and referendum, which our nation has found good, be denied to Fribourg? We must take up the agitation now and not rest until we have succeeded. We must have the initiative and referendum for the future."

"What has the government to say concerning this proposal?" I queried.

"Python and his government are against the initiative and referendum because they know it will destroy their power and they cannot do as they please. Their political life is at stake, and Python has even gone so far as to say in a public speech that he would oppose even the just demands of his enemies; referring in this remark to the demand for the referendum."

The demonstration was complete, and as I left the office of the earnest reformer with a

goodly package of his La Independent under my arm, containing the articles he had read, I realized that one problem I had crossed the ocean to solve to my own satisfaction was settled for me for all time. I knew that the absence of bribery, corruption and misrepresentative government in the Swiss republic is not due to the Alps, the size of the country, some ancient tradition of liberty, or the exceptional political ability of its people, but to a legislative instrument which (to clumsily borrow a physiological term) allows its citizenship to constantly functionate.

From 1848 to 1870 Switzerland, in nation and canton, was governed by elected representatives under a constitution patterned after that of the United States. Her political history for that period reads like a chapter from the annals of New York under Tammany hall. Since the introduction of the initiative and referendum, the people have come into their own. It is an honor to be in the public service. Bosses and hoodlers have disappeared, and Switzerland today is a beacon light that fires and cheers the heart of every true lover of democracy the world around.

What shall we say, then, when right in the midst of that splendid group of twenty-five progressive cantons, lies Fribourg, with her "pure representative government," under the absolute dominion of the man with the "little stick?"

I know that some attribute the condition of Fribourg to the influence of the priests, but I do not. Business is no respecter of religions. Take away the wealthy families and business men of the canton the special privileges they enjoy under the autocrat Python, and there would follow a revolt which the priests would soon find good cause to champion. Other cantons as Catholic as Fribourg have the referendum, and priests and people alike would defend it to the last ditch. The fundamental trouble with Fribourg is special privilege.

Another thing my Swiss experience finally settled for me. When through with the study of Boss Python, I knew that representative government everywhere and always is bound to fail ultimately. I had long believed this as a matter of theory, but now it was brought home with crushing force. Its inherent vice, the delegating to another to do what you must do for yourself, will always and everywhere generate a careless, dependent, and finally hopeless citizenship which gradually becomes the prey of some despotism, and the universal tendency of men to abuse delegated power will ever make unguarded representative bodies schools for the training of despots whose tyrannies spell the death of liberty and are the precursors of revolution.

CHAMP CLARK

Writing in his paper (The Public) Louis F. Post, says: "Champ Clark is the present touchstone of democracy in democracy. Whoever of either party hates democracy, will plot against Clark's election to the speakership. By the growing weakness or strength of the opposition to him shall the people be able to judge whether the democratic party in congress is to 'make good' or make bad. Puck truly says, and Puck's humor is impregnated with sense:

"Clothes do not make the man; neither does the label, democrat, make of a man working force for democratic democracy. The announcement in a Washington dispatch that a number of democratic congressmen 'did not cotton much to the program of electing Champ Clark to be speaker of the house' was not an overwhelming surprise. The surprise would have been due if they had advocated Clark's elevation to the speakership, for among the adherents of Cannon and Cannonism no members of the house, not even the most stubborn standpatters, were more steadfast in their loyalty to all that should not be than these same 'democrats.' Champ Clark can get no better recommendation for the post of speaker than the opposition of such a crew."

"The latest insidious attack upon Clark by the interests is the statement that his election would be a Bryan victory. We don't profess to know about that, but we are sure that nothing could be more gratifying to most genuine democrats to have it so, nor anything so disheartening to all plutocrats."

The American Homestead, a monthly farm journal of national scope, will be sent to all Commoner subscribers, without additional cost, who renew their subscriptions during the month of January when this notice is mentioned.