

lation. In Canada, on a somewhat smaller scale, the same situation has existed. The unprejudiced student of Canadian history since Confederation will look in vain for an example of real democratic government either at Ottawa or in any of the provinces. Both political parties, provincial and federal, have been directly or indirectly influenced by the plutocratic element in the country. We have yet to see in Canada a government that places the welfare of the people above the prestige and spoils of office. We may look through the history of every Parliament in Canada and we can see the mark of the handiwork of Special Privilege. But we search in vain for a voluntary recognition of the underlying principles of true democracy. The big interests of Canada have incessantly knocked at the doors of federal and provincial Parliaments—and have not knocked in vain. Their pleadings have been listened to and their prayers have been granted. Year by year provincial and federal Parliaments have handed over the natural resources of the nation into the hands of private individuals, and have opened the public treasury to the same insatiable elements. The voice of the people has not been dominant in Canadian Parliaments.

There have been several causes which have contributed to this most unsatisfactory and undemocratic condition. One of these has been our party system of government. It is the best we have at the present time, but it certainly is not satisfactory and cannot be regarded as the ultimate democratic solution of national politics. The party system has resulted in blinding the people to their own interests and consequently has placed them in the hands of designing individuals and corporations. It must be very gratifying to all earnest workers for democracy to note that in the federal elections last month, there was a greater evidence of independent voting and the breaking down of party ties than ever before in Canadian history. Both parties suffered considerable by having a real issue placed before the people. Another factor which has contributed to the slow growth of the democratic spirit has been the tremendous and unparalleled material prosperity in Canada. Probably no country in the world has advanced so rapidly in the last generation as has Canada. Tremendous administrative tasks have fallen upon our governments in order to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population, and the eyes of the people have been kept riveted upon the expansion of our commercial life. Consequently social and economic questions have been kept in the background. But today there is a remarkable awakening taking place among the Anglo Saxon people of this continent. The people of the United States are in open rebellion against the regime of plutocracy, and the citadel of Special Privilege in the great Republic to the south is tottering upon its unstable foundation. In Canada also, particularly in Western Canada, public spirit is beginning to assert itself. The people are realizing that the tendency of present legislation is strongly opposed against the welfare of the common people. Until recently, however, there has been a deplorable apathy on the part of the public. One of the chief reasons for this has been the lack of a free and independent press. In Canada today there are not more than a handful of progressive, independent, daily or weekly newspapers, and there is a total absence of weekly and monthly magazines, independent of political parties and corporations with the courage to fight the battle of democracy. In the United States there are a large number of such magazines doing a wonderful work in educating the people along progressive lines. Their magazines have a circulation of several millions and they have been the greatest factor in opening the eyes of the people to the dangers which confront them. There are also in the United States a number of very able and progressive statesmen who have refused to bow the knee to Special Privilege, and who are fighting the battle of the people day and night. We have a great dearth of such men in Canada. We have

not a single example in Parliament of an unselfish statesman fighting boldly for democracy. The only hope in Canada is to educate the common people to a realization of their dangers and their needs. This can be done by the formation of organizations for the study of political questions and by the dissemination of progressive literature. We have a great and abiding faith in the wisdom of the common people and we sincerely believe that they are democratic in their instincts. Their temporary lapses from the true path of democracy have been due rather to their lack of information than to their deliberate reactionary instincts. It is the duty of those who see the light to assist in carrying the gospel of democracy to those who are yet without a true realization of the needs of their country. The demand of the times will produce the men and the journals. Special Privilege is always educating the people for its own ends and the soldiers of democracy must never be idle.

THE CALIFORNIAN REVOLUTION

The newspapers are giving very little attention to the result of the California elections on October 10, when the people declared for the Initiative, Referendum and Recall by an overwhelming majority, and also gave a smaller majority in favor of woman suffrage. Why do the newspapers give so little attention to the advance of democracy? Here is the way The Public, that democratic weekly of Chicago, views it:

"In one of the great states of the Union a veritable revolution has occurred. Yet newspaper readers without reading glasses of high magnifying power would hardly know it but for private correspondents. You can tell from the Hearst newspapers that something important happened and the Hearst did it; but if you want detail and color you must turn to the murder reports. In other papers at first there were strong symptoms of highly sensational dispatches, but as soon as it appeared that woman suffrage had not been defeated but had won, these symptoms rapidly receded. Had California voted down woman suffrage, the Recall and the Initiative and Referendum, it may be inferred from past experience that headlines would have screamed. But in a victory for all three there is 'no news.' It is common to attribute this kind of newspaper reticence to Big Business control. That is probably a mistake in this instance. At any rate the control is probably not direct. A more likely explanation is the incompetency of news gatherers and news editors. Trained, more or less consciously, to regard certain business interests as the classes to be served by news reports, they have formed the habit of magnifying and coloring what they think those interests would like exploited and of minimizing what such interests do not like, until competency for distinguishing the wants of business interests from news service has atrophied. However, news reports or none, good ones or poor ones, hereafter women in California are to have full suffrage, legislatures will pass laws subject to popular veto; they may be over-ridden by popular Initiative when they refuse to pass laws the people want, and judges will go into partnership with corporations at peril of their office. This is revolution. But it is a republican, democratic, beneficent and characteristically American type of revolution."

The same applies well in Canada. But the progress of reform cannot be stopped. Plutocracy may put obstacles in the way but the general educational work now being done will overturn them all. Women now have the franchise in California, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Colorado and Washington. The women are justly asking for a larger share in the government—and they are getting it.

ONTARIO REFORM MOVEMENT

The Tax Reform League of Ontario, which includes within its membership many in-

fluential supporters of both political parties, is endeavoring to bring pressure to bear upon the provincial government to secure a change in the assessment law, making it optional on the part of municipalities to tax improvements more lightly than land values. Over three hundred municipalities in Ontario have petitioned for this change, and 168 newspapers of both political parties have either petitioned the government for it or editorially approved of it. The amendment asked for would not compel municipalities to exempt improvements from taxation, either wholly or partially, yet Sir James Whitney, the all-powerful premier of Ontario, will not permit the passage of a bill to allow those municipalities that wish to do so, to make a change in their methods of taxation. This is a situation which forcibly illustrates the need of the Initiative and Referendum.

EAST AND WEST

The people on the land in Eastern Canada have much in common with those in the West. Here is a letter in proof:

"The Grain Growers' Guide,
Winnipeg.
Gentlemen:—

Enclosed please find the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), the same being subscription in advance for The Grain Growers' Guide. I have read several copies of your excellent journal and find that it gives expression not only to my views on many of the leading public questions of the day, but to those of a great many others down here. We of the East, who till the soil, feel that we have much in common with you men of the West, who are engaged in a like occupation. I am fully convinced that the farmers have not an adequate representation in the House of Commons, and owing to this fact their just rights are ignored by both political parties.

Wishing you every success in your noble work, I am

Yours very truly,

WILBUR GARVIE."

Owen Sound, Ont.
Oct. 21, '11.

When we can organize as a unit the progressive forces of the East and the West, then will conditions change for the better.

Many thousands of men in this Western country are deeply and sincerely interested in the work of reform in which the organized farmers are engaged. They realize thoroughly how necessary it is to have sound progressive reading matter placed in the hands of the people. These men are the friends who have aided in making The Guide the great success it is today. By bringing it to the attention of their friends they secure new subscribers and at the same time new recruits to the ranks of the organized farmers. The enemies of The Guide and the organized farmers are active and are working against us all the time. It will need all the vigilance and energy of the friends of democracy to keep the work going. Any friend who lends a hand to secure new subscribers to The Guide is bringing the day of better things nearer.

There is talk of a short session of Parliament being held before Christmas and another one being called early in the New Year. The only benefit such a move will be to Canada will be that each of the members will draw his \$2,500 salary twice instead of once.

More than half the increase in Manitoba during the past ten years has been in the cities and towns. It will require strenuous efforts on the part of the provincial authorities to see that rural Manitoba does not rapidly go into decay.