

THE INITIATIVE LAW.

Remedy for a Defective System of Government.

A Popular People's Vote Provided for in the Referendum.

[From the Canada Farmer's Sun.]

Those who desire to effect any change in our laws find great difficulties in the way. One of the greatest of these is the task of getting the matter fairly before the law-making power. In the first place it is impossible to ascertain what proportion of the citizens are satisfied with the existing condition, and of those who wish a change, what is the particular change they desire. We have no machinery of government for these purposes, and in this our system of government is very defective. The remedy proposed is the initiative and referendum.

The initiative is simply a petition having the power with it of compelling the law-making body to whom it is addressed (whether municipal, legislative or parliamentary) to prepare a bill or a bill embodying the terms of the petition and carrying out its object.

The referendum would then require that this bill or bill should be submitted to the popular vote, and, if approved of by a majority, it becomes law.

It will be noticed that under this arrangement the municipal council and legislative bodies would retain the power to make laws and to transact the ordinary routine business in the same way as they now do; and as they would retain this power to make laws even though no demand had been made for them by the public, it is proposed that by means of the referendum proposed that by legislation as they may find undesirable. This can be accomplished as follows: All important laws, which are not of such a nature that they should immediately go into effect, are required to remain in abeyance for three months. During that time if a petition is presented signed by the required number of electors, asking that the law be submitted to popular vote, it must be so submitted and stand or fall by the result of the voting.

It will thus be seen that so far as municipal matters are concerned, the initiative and referendum are simply extensions of a principle already recognized and acted upon. Many money bills and other laws, which are of a technical nature, are submitted to the vote of the people to initiate legislation is conceded. It is proposed by the initiative to make the power to initiate general. By the referendum it is sought to require many additional matters to be submitted to the popular vote, when demanded by a large number of the voters.

It is proposed that these two principles should also be recognized in our Provincial and Dominion legislation. They have been found to work well in municipal matters and there is no reason why they should not be equally as efficacious in the larger spheres. In money bills, which are submitted to popular vote, there is no suspicion of bribery or corruption. Where municipalities have the power to hand over valuable franchises to private corporations without the check imposed by a popular vote, bribery of the council and other men almost invariably follow. Witness the recent cases in Chicago and Toledo.

In the latter city it is said that a ring of aldermen had a regular scale of prices, upon the payment of which any civic legislator desired could be secured by those interested. Under the referendum this could not happen. Thus the immediate effect would be to remove those corrupting influences from politics. There, consequently, remaining nothing to be made out of politics, those who are looking towards it as a means of accumulating wealth, and they are many, would find its attractions gone, and they would make way for honest men. In this way also would politics be still further purified.

Many changes of a radical nature are becoming necessary. The people are ready for them. Combines must be made criminal. Monopolies must pass under public control. Our laws must be made in the interests of the people. They are now working in the interests of classes. Unfortunately those classes have a controlling influence in our political parties. The readiest way of dissolving the old political combinations and preventing new, is to place in the hands of the people the power to make their own laws, without assistance or even in opposition to the two political parties. This can only be done by first securing the right to initiate legislation as is proposed in the initiative. This, when secured, will be a new Magna Carta of the people's liberty more important in its results than that obtained by the barons at Runnymede. That at the most was only a step in the right direction—the initiative and referendum will complete the good work that began.

No urge to pass laws be ready to do their share promptly when petitions are presented for signature asking Parliament to pass a law giving effect to this measure. It is a law founded on the principles of justice, as all good laws are, and its passage will be hailed with pleasure by working men in cities as well as those in the country.

The Queen's Suppliant.

[From the Taunton Magazine.]

The story of the three wishes is familiar to most of us as an illustration of the disadvantage of not knowing exactly what to ask for when one gets the change. The sailor who replied "More" to the question "What do you want?" "More Rum" is another example of it. The little girl who met the Queen on the Riviera seems to have been free from this weakness. She knew exactly what she wanted, and had no scruple about men-tioning it. Her whole address (which one concludes was no more extempore than "addresses" usually are) was a model of greatness mingled with worldly wisdom. There was no shilly-shallying about it; having got her opportunity she resolved to use it to the best advantage; she was not overcome, even in the presence of majesty, by shyness; the request she made was itself a feat.

Hearing that a queen had come into this neighborhood, I ascended the hill and sought this opportunity of addressing her. (Here she stopped her Majesty's donkey.) "A queen is a good fairy, and by her no doubt the dearest wish of my heart will be granted." "Well, what is it my dear?" "I want to visit Paris." It is probable that when this little girl grows up she will "go far." Much further than Paris.

BRAVE KATE SHELLY.

She Saved Two Trainloads of People from Death and Was Rewarded With \$500 and a Medal.

[Burlington Hawkeye.]

Some ten years ago Iowa's brave heroine, Kate Shelly, living near Ogden, in this county, saved from a horrible fate two trainloads of people by creeping in the storm and darkness across a swaying bridge weakened by the flood and warning them of the danger.

At the time Miss Shelly lived with a widowed mother in a house incumbered by a mortgage, and she was then trying as best she could to pay it off. By the heavy burden of her act in warning the trains she saved hundreds of lives and much valuable property. The passengers gave her \$100, the railroad company gave her a like amount, the Legislature of the State voted her a medal and her deed was forgotten, and she herself, because she was too noble to complain of the meagerly treatment she received at the hands of those whose lives and property she had saved, retired to her home and again began the work of paying off the mortgage on the house. Some time ago, however, she died, and her body was found in the house. It was then that the people of this Commonwealth learned of the noble deed of this noble woman.

BIRD-EATING SPIDERS.

They are Big, Ferocious, and Have a Constant Appetite.

Among the new attractions at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London, are a couple of bird-eating spiders, presented to the Zoological Society by Mr. T. Terry, of The Grange, Borough Green, Kent, who brought several of these interesting arachnids from Port of Spain, Trinidad. Spiders at large are, perhaps, not very attractive creatures, regarded, that is, from the popular standpoint; but, taken from the popular standpoint, they serve to interest even the most casual of observers. Of course, spiders are not "at all" at all. Though they belong to the same great division of the animal world, they form quite a different branch of the zoological tree which includes the lobsters and crabs, spiders, insects and centipedes among its branches.

An insect has only six legs, a spider has eight—the two from "legs" of a spider are really appendages of its mouth, to its ten-legged appearance is thus explained. Then, also, an insect has its head, chest and tail distinctly marked, the head and chest being joined in the spiders. There are no feelers or antennae (as such) in the spiders, and they breathe by lung sacs, and not by air tubes, as do the insects, while, finally, wings are never developed in the spider class. The bird-eating spiders cannot legitimately be called "arachnids" more probably they are related to the Mygalae group, of which the tarantulas of Southern Europe are examples. There is a spider common in the Southern States of America which makes its net so strong that it can catch a small bird. The tarantulas are not, as a rule, of any size, and the story about their bite causing "dancing madness" is, of course, pure fiction.

The bird-eating spiders at the "Zoo" are male and female, and, as usual in the spider class, the female is the bigger. For the spiders are not so satisfactorily solved the woman's rights question, and not only do they devour their husbands, but often end domestic differences by eating them. The poison apparatus exists in the mouth, the mandible, or big jaws, being provided with a poison fang, which draws its store of venom from a poison gland. Mr. Terry says there is no doubt his spiders kill small birds. Mice they will sometimes capture as well. He feeds his spiders on cockroaches, beetles and moths, and has tried them with very young sparrows. With regard to the effects of their bite on man, Mr. Terry says they often cause death; but one may be pardoned for being somewhat skeptical on this latter point, though there is no reason to doubt that, with the bite of the scorpion or of a big centipede, severe inflammation may follow the wound made by a big spider.

LEGAL QUERIES.

WIFE—Can a woman's property be seized for her husband's debts without her consent? **ANS.**—No.INQUIRE—What amount of the wages of a single man (over 21) is exempt from garnishment? **ANS.**—If the man has a family dependent on him for support, \$25; otherwise there is no exemption.WIDOW—After the death of her husband, can a widow do what she likes with her share of the property? **ANS.**—Yes, unless she takes her share under his will, in which case it would be subject to any provisions therein might be in the will restraining her powers of disposal.DAYS—The trustees of a school section hire a person by the year for making fires and he neglects it and the scholars have to make fires. Can they claim pay? **ANS.**—No. 2. A hires B to work on a farm, and the agreement was that if B was not satisfied he could leave. B works part of his time, then leaves. Can B claim his wages? **ANS.**—Yes.GLANWORTH—I bought a cow at an auction sale which was represented to calve in the middle of April and did not calve till the 15th day of July (three months behind time). Is the seller entitled to full payment of my note which he holds? **ANS.**—The seller is entitled to full payment, but the representation apparently amounted to a warranty of which there has been a breach, for which he is liable to you in damages which you may sue him at once, or you may claim them in a suit for the note. You had better consult a lawyer specially if your damages are of sufficient importance.THORP—A councillor who lives in an incorporated village has a 50-acre farm in the township over two miles from his residence and about half a mile from the line between the municipalities. Can he qualify as councillor for the township at the coming election? Can he qualify on freehold to \$400, or is it in actual occupation of the farm assessed at \$2,000? **ANS.**—He lives within two miles of the township boundary and is therefore qualified as to residence. He is not required to live on his farm or within two miles of it. He must qualify as to property on the \$400 assessment, ever and above all in the \$400 assessment, and he is not in actual occupation of the farm, and therefore cannot qualify on a \$2,000 assessment unaffected by inclusions.HULLITT—A and B own adjoining farms. Part of A's water flows onto B's south part of farm, part of B's and C's water flows onto A's north part. A line ditch was dug by A on his side some years ago. By mutual agreement B has repaired said ditch since it was dug. A fills up the ditch in a fit moment to spite B. B has also filled up another line ditch on his side some years ago. Has he a right to fill it up? A has not a foot of line ditch on his side while B has about 150 rods. Can B compel A to reopen the ditch? If so, how? Will the line ditch be dug on A's side of the line? How will it proceed to get the matter adjusted? **ANS.**—Proceed under the Ditches and Watercourses Act, chapter 220, Revised Statutes of Ontario, and obtain an award from the township engineer, who will settle the location, size, cost, etc. The act has been amended in some particulars, which may or may not affect your proceedings.

FORESTRY.

Preservation of the Trees a Necessity to Ontario's Future Welfare.

To the Editor of the ADVERTISER:

It is now some seven or eight years since I first brought this subject before your readers, and as the subject is one of general interest, perhaps they would like to hear of the progress that has been made since that time. It was beginning to be apparent to everyone that in the settled districts of Ontario we were carrying the process of clearing to too great an extent, and that great as our former resources had been in the matter of firewood, shelter and lumber we had arrived at a point when it was necessary to husband them, lest a period of general necessity should shortly ensue.

At this time the Ontario Government considered that it would be well if such information as could be obtained on the matter should be made general, and steps have been taken to that effect. Some of the principal forests in Europe and America have been visited with the intention of observing the methods of forestry practiced there, and excursions have been made to most of the counties in Ontario and to the districts in which our lumbering operations are in progress. The result of these visits and the opinions of those best informed on the subject were obtained, which opinions were referred to the consideration of those interested in the matter, both by means of official reports, many thousands of which have been distributed, and by numerous letters published in the press.

The action has been productive of decidedly good results, both legislative and private. It being found that the chief lumbering districts had mostly to be cleared, a large force of fire rangers are now stationed each summer to prevent its ravages, while measures are also being taken to establish a forestry reserve, twenty townships, a course of action which, among other things, it includes the sources of many of the leading rivers of Ontario, which it is of great importance to protect by securing the existence of forests around them, and next, if well managed it will continue as a supply of timber for all time to come. In our old districts also good results have followed. Hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted, and many farms are now sheltered by good windbreaks. Many of these improvements have been undertaken informally by the owners, were undertaken in consequence of the literary information distributed among them. But although much has been done, it is but a very small portion compared with that which is needed in Ontario. To be of value for agricultural or grazing purposes, such a large area of Ontario needs to be interspersed with forests. It was originally covered with them, and to deprive it utterly of their protection would greatly decrease the fertility of the whole. The following quotation from a leading European writer gives a valuable opinion as to the effects of forest on moisture.

The asserted influence in forest clearing in determining irregularities in river flow has long been transferred from the region of speculation to that of exact science. European nations plant forests for the express purpose of regulating river flow, with as full confidence as the farmer sows his seed when he drains a swampy meadow. The Swiss Government has just made a large appropriation for this object. We have not merely the evidence that wholesale forests clearances invariably followed by irregularity of flow in all the rivers, exhibiting destructive floods at one season, followed by dry beds or a sluggish flow at another season, but we have the positive evidence afforded by the reforestation of the slopes bordering the Rhine and other European rivers that with the growth of the forests the rivers are restored to their original regularity of flow, and the fact of the supposed connection having been thus demonstrated by experience. The mode in which forests exert their influence in this direction has been investigated and rendered familiar to all who have made the subject their study. Yours, etc., R. W. PHIPPS.

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