

THE FORUM—(Continued).

majority has the right to control this control under the Dayton system is absolute and exclusive. The majority determines the policy of the government and also excludes a large minority from representation. As criticism cannot be voiced in the council by representatives of the minority, irregular and underisable methods of expression are used—criticisms often uninformed and unjust.

And it is asked—What is to be expected but the division of the community into hostile camps if a bare majority of the voters can get all the representation in the only deliberative body in the city, the body which levies and spends the taxes of all? The election of such a body does not call for any division at all, either at large or by districts, but merely for condensation, the boiling down of the many voters into the true spokesmen of the several elements or opinions among them.

The Need For Proportional Representation.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia returned only one or two opposition candidates at the last general election, although 150,000 electors voted for the Opposition. These voters are unrepresented. In Quebec, only three Unionists were elected, although 76,000 voted Unionist. The government has two seats in Prince Edward Island, although the Unionist vote was 12,297 and the Opposition 12,515.

With proportional representation the parties would be represented in proportion to their real strength.

Disqualifying the Workers.

One of the most objectionable laws passed by the Quebec Legislature last session increased the deposit to be made by Montreal aldermanic candidates from \$200 to \$500. The bill was introduced by a country member. No doubt at the next provincial election, candidates for the legislative assembly will be asked to declare their position on this question.

The idea underlying this law is much the same as the divine right of kings, and tends to put the rights of property above moral worth. There are many worthy, industrious citizens who do not acquire much, if any property, while others take all they can get from their community without giving much if any real public service. The new law is not democratic and should be changed.

The Open Forum and Direct Legislation.

Under direct legislation an appeal may be taken from the action or non-action of representatives to the voters. It gives direct self-government. Without direct legislation people must live under such laws as their representatives choose to pass and such laws only. This subjection to the will of representatives exists in all of our provinces and all of our towns and cities except St. John, N.B., Lethbridge (Alta), . . . Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta electors have voted in favor of direct legislation, but the representatives have so far failed to carry the elector's wishes into effect. How easy it is for representatives to block the going into force of a law to them undesirable. Until there is political machinery enabling voters to pass or reject laws of their choosing there is no real government of the people by the people.

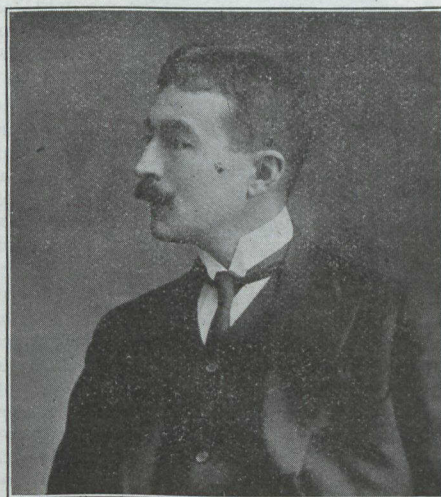
Under our present representative system, many evils have developed. Special interests, by influencing elections and by influencing legislators after election gain an undue influence and often completely control the course of the principle legislation enacted.

Direct legislation breaks the power of private interests and keep the laws in harmony with public opinion and public interest as is to be seen clearly enough by a study of the experience of Switzerland since direct legislation was adopted by that country (probably the nearest to a real democracy) forty years ago.

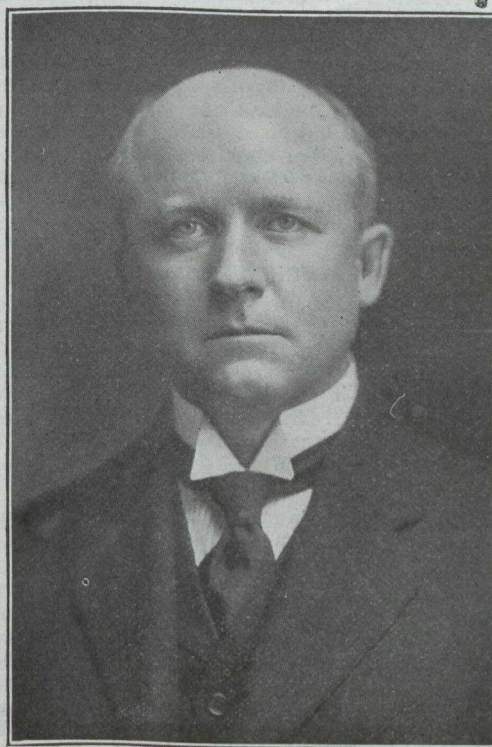
Under this system it is found the voters are conservative and constructive, not radical and destructive. Perhaps the best evidence that this reform is in the interest of the mass of voters is that it is (generally) opposed by those who are not willing to give up some special privilege, and those who do not trust the voters and fear a real democracy. The danger of popular government is in an uninformed and therefore unintelligent electorate.

When through indifference the electors lose control of their government it passes into the hands of persons who often neglect the interest of the general public. When

Two Past Presidents of the Canadian Good Roads Association who will attend the Annual Congress at Hamilton, Ont.



B. MICHAUD,
Deputy Minister of Roads for Province of Quebec.



W. A. McLEAN,
Deputy Minister of Highways for Province of Ontario.

voters consider distinct questions and policies a splendid educational work is being done. If electors are to vote for measures as well as men some opportunity should be given for public discussion of public questions.

A People's Forum has (as is now quite generally known) been established at Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Calgary and all have had a successful season.

Given a hall, a speaker, with a message, tactful chairman, and an audience, and any community may have an open forum.

"Regenerate the individual" is a half truth; the reorganization of the society which he makes and which makes him is the other half.—Henry D. Lloyd.