

**THE FORUM—(Continued).****DIRECT GOVERNMENT.**

Direct government, whatever may be its virtues or vices, is no substitute for representative government. No one in his right mind thinks that it is or ought to be. Every one of the highly complicated questions of modern government calls for expert inquiry and for full and open discussion of all aspects before action is taken. In that discussion it is admittedly desirable to have the views of all considerable groups of interests and opinions. The more light from various angles, the better for democracy. But a return to the direct representation of farmers, labor, capitalists, professional classes, etc., is unthinkable. It was possible only in the rigid and unchanging society of the middle ages which was sharply divided into legal classes so that each man knew where he stood in the economic scale. Such a stratification of modern society is impossible—highly undesirable if possible.

Proportional representation is the way out. It calls for no legal and rigid classification of groups. It simply permits the voluntary and natural groupings of citizens to secure honest and direct representation of their views. It encourages them to put forward their best spokesmen—men whose views are known and understood, not shifty gentry who are never just where they are expected to be. It recognizes the obvious fact that while all men and women may be equal in the sight of the Lord they are not engaged in the same mundane occupations and are not alike in their interests, their tastes, and their opinions.

Proportional representation is a plan for the co-operation of all the diverse interests of modern society in the solution of common problems and the management of common affairs. We are following the plan in the vigorous prosecution of the Great War. In all the important boards and commissions the representatives of capital and labor are to be found, and the rules promulgated by these boards and commissions are the result of co-operative consideration. In our local communities it is through a fusion of all associations, groups, and interests that we raise money, undertake relief work, and plan for the future services in winning the War. Community co-operation is the national watchword. Co-operation is to be the great sign of the twentieth century, just as democracy was the great sign of the nineteenth century. Democracy is now winning its final triumph on the fields of battle. Co-operation has yet to win, but it is steadily winning.

Proportional representation is the governmental instrument through which a co-operative democracy can realize its ideals and accomplish its purposes.

**FRANCHISE OBLIGATIONS.**

Mayor Hyman countered cleverly on the New York street railroads that are asking for higher fares when he directed Corporation Counsel Burr to begin at once an investigation to determine whether the corporations are living up to their franchise obligations. If they are not he wants legal proceedings begun to annul the franchises. The Mayor explains in a letter to Mr. Burr that the corporations now asking for more revenue are not the companies to whom the franchises were granted, but holding companies organized to take over the original companies. "Each holding company that is organized," the Mayor says, results in additional financial burdens in the shape of watered stock, and then they endeavor to make a return or profit on such watered stock, with the result that the property rights in the old company are three or four times capitalized. The result of this is additional financial burdens, the curtailing of service and equipment to the people, and the payment of small wages to employees in an endeavor to meet the enormous obligations that these many different corporations, one on top of the other, are under obligations to meet on account of watered stock transactions." The Mayor cites as an illustration the case of the persons who were given a franchise to use Fourth Avenue. This was turned over to another company, which actually runs the cars, while the franchise owners receive \$400,000 a year without performing any service at all to the people. "Millions of dollars," he says, "have been paid to one family since the franchise was granted all of which was taken out of the pockets of the people in nickels." This sounds promising. It is to be hoped that it is not all politics; for in it really lies the answer to the demand for increased fares—"The Public."

**BRITISH LABOR AND P. R.**

From Pamphlet No. 39 of the English P. R. Society.

Resolutions in favour of proportional representation were debated at the Trades Union Congress, September, 1917, and at the Labour Party Conference, Nottingham, January, 1918. At the latter, the resolution was made part of a composite resolution on electoral reform and was carried without a division. This was the first Conference of the Labour Party at which the principle of proportional representation was endorsed. It was subsequently embodied in No. XI. (Political Reforms) of the Resolutions on Reconstruction submitted at the London Conference (of the Labour Party), June, 1918, in the following words: "the best practicable arrangements for ensuring that every minority has its proportionate and no more than its proportionate representation." A motion to delete these words was rejected by a large majority. Further, a new proposal by the National Union of Clerks that proportional representation should be applied to municipal and other local government election was accepted by the Executive Committee of the Party and carried unanimously.

The London Labour Party decided (June, 1918), when considering its constitution, to elect its Executive Committee by proportional representation.

A very interesting periodical is the "New Jersey Municipalities." The editor is Professor Claude H. Anderson, of Princeton University. The October number contains a particularly interesting article on the "Housing Proposition Policy With Regard to Local Needs," and also an interesting article on "Power of State Council to Deal with Rent Profiteering."

A new weekly paper, "The Leader," is being published at Maisonneuve. It covers the eastern part of the City of Montreal, Maisonneuve, Rosemount, Longue Pointe and Tetreauville. The editor is Mr. T. R. Harvitt, who is employed with Vickers, Limited. It is a sign of the times to have an English paper in the eastern part of the City. On account of the establishment of the shipbuilding works of Vickers Company in the East End there was a great many more English speaking people than heretofore. Let us hope "The Leader" will do some useful educational work and that it will keep the good will of our French speaking people.

A standing committee on plans and propaganda of the Canadian National Re-constructive Groups has just issued a useful brochure on the problems of national re-construction. The chairman of this organization is Mr. Warwick Chipman, K.C., a member of the Montreal Bar. The honorary secretary is Mr. Francis Handkin, formerly president of St. James' Literary Society. This committee wishes to co-operate with other bodies which may have similar objects, such objects as Canadian Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Industrial Association, Canadian problems, Women's Clubs, Literary organizations, returned soldiers' societies, Canadian Industrial Re-construction Association, and other societies which may be interested. The committee may assist in the creation of a Ministry of Re-construction, which they effectively co-ordinated to further government action in Canada. They will be glad to have the groups formed in different parts of Canada. Communications may be addressed to the honorary secretary at 201 Coristine Building, Montreal, and from whom copies of their pamphlets may be obtained.

**"THE HOTELS OF THE CENTURY."**

The Grand Trunk System has created a chain of magnificent hotels to serve the travelling public and cater to the social life of the large Canadian cities. In service, design, construction and furnishings they have set a new standard for the Dominion of Canada. They are, in every sense, great hotels, operated by specialists of wide experience. In the city of Ottawa there is The Chateau Laurier one of the most beautiful hotel buildings in America. In the city of Winnipeg, on the site of the old Fort Garry of frontier days, there is the Fort Garry, which confidently challenges comparison with any of the famous hotels of this continent. In the capital city of Alberta, Edmonton, on the banks of the Saskatchewan, is The Macdonald, another notable link in this chain of hotels built for public service.