

tion and at the same time binds the adherents of the parties together and furnishes the incentive to sacrifice the interests of the country for the interests of the party. Party exigency fills the place which should be occupied by the public weal. The remedy, then, is to so change the system as to make it impossible for our representative bodies to control those monies and interests independent of the consent of the electors. At the same time the refusal of that consent should not affect the position of the government of the day.

To insure the consideration and adoption of progressive legislation there should be the power in the people themselves to directly initiate legislation and to compel the adoption of the measures they propose even though the same may not meet with the views of their representatives. Our system of legislation should also provide some method by which the will of the people can be ascertained upon any measure of importance. *In fact our various representative bodies should exist solely for the purpose of ascertaining and carrying into effect the wishes of the people.* The idea that the leaders of public opinion were to be found among our politicians has long since been recognized as a mere fiction. Our system of partizan government renders the advocacy of progressive measures by politicians well nigh an impossibility. Politicians move forward only as they are compelled by public opinion.

In consideration of these many disadvantages of our present system, the joint committee representing the various industrial, social and economic reform associations of the city of Toronto, invite the co-operation of the citizens of Canada in the endeavor to secure such changes in our system of government as will enable the people to directly initiate and control legislation. For this purpose we suggest the adoption of:

First,—The Initiative, by which the voters of any municipality, province, or the Dominion may demand the sub-

mission of a new law or the alteration or abolition of any existing law within the jurisdiction of the body to whom the demand is presented. Upon the demand being presented it shall be the duty of the municipal council, legislative assembly or Dominion Parliament, as the case may be, to prepare an Act in accordance with the terms of the demand and submit it to the popular vote for approval or rejection. If approved it forthwith becomes law.

Second,—The Referendum, a provision by which all enactments of a general nature, and which are not urgent in their character, do not become law until three months after they have been passed by the representative body. During those three months the voters may demand that the measure be submitted to the popular vote.

Third,—Such other measures as may be necessary to bring our political system into harmony with the above suggested changes.

These methods have been in force in the cantons of Switzerland for many years. Instituted in the Canton of St. Gallen, in 1831, they were gradually adopted by the other cantons, until one or both is now in force in every canton where there is no general assembly, except Fribourg. The referendum has been in operation in federal legislation since the year 1848.

Messrs. Adams & Cunningham, in their work, "The Swiss Confederation," published in 1888, use the following words to describe the effects of this system upon Swiss politicians, legislation and the people: "The referendum has struck root and expanded wherever it has been introduced, and no serious politician of any party would now think of attempting its abolition. The Conservatives, who violently opposed its introduction, became its earnest supporters when they found that it undoubtedly acted as a drag upon hasty and radical law making."

"A sufficient period has elapsed to allow the people of Switzerland