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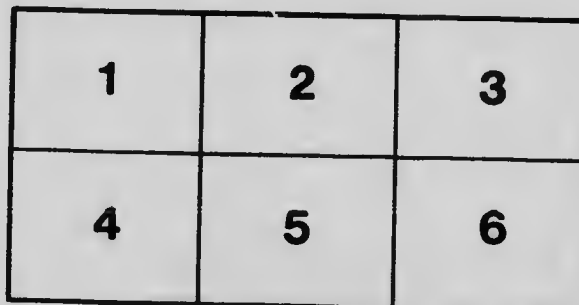
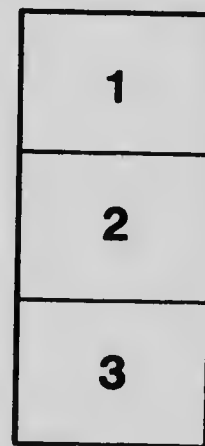
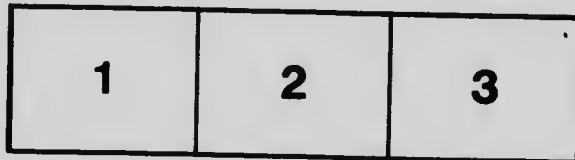
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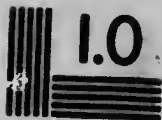
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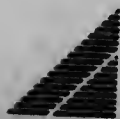
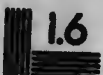
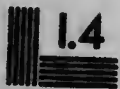
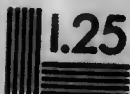


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# Direct Legislation

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Address by F. J. Dixon before  
the Presbyterian Synod, on  
November 15th, 1911 :: ::

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Very frequently the winter highways in the Yukon Valley are mere trails, traversed only by dog sledges. One of the bishops in Alaska, who was very fond of that mode of travel, encountered a miner coming out with his dog team, and stopped to ask him what kind of a road he had come over.

The miner responded with a stream of forcible and picturesque profanity, winding up with: "And what kind o' trail did you have?" "Same as yours," replied the bishop feelingly.

I fear that I shall not be able to express my feelings in such forcible and picturesque language as the members of this synod would use on such an occasion; but I hope you will forgive me for any deficiency of language, and I believe that you will agree with me when I say that, however different our trails may be in other walks of life, in the political field we are all travelling over the same kind of a trail. A stony, thorny trail, which runs through the slimy bogs of corruption, and over the arid sand hills of barren expectation.

We often discover that we have been following a blind trail; that all our labor has been in vain, and sometimes like Christian, we fall into the hands of the Giant called Despair.

Yet, in spite of many disappointments, inspired by that great hope which springs eternal in the human breast, we turn

our eyes toward the mountain top and stumble on toward democracy.

We must, willingly or unwillingly, travel together over this trail which leads to democracy. It is therefore wise for us to take counsel together over our common difficulties, and together seek for the best way to overcome those difficulties. I will not waste much time in discussing the evils which have developed under our so-called representative system of government, but it will be necessary for me to say a few words on that phase of the subject in order to prove the need for direct legislation.

#### Capitalized Corruption.

The Grits tell me that the Tory party is corrupt and the Tories tell me the Grit party is corrupt, and I believe that both accusations are true. There is a great deal of corruption in both parties. I met a man the other day who told me that he had been paid \$7 for his vote by one party and \$15 by the other. He reminded me of the Southern negro who sold his vote to both parties. The Republican heeler gave this free and independent voter \$3, upon discovering this the Democratic heeler handed the colored gentleman \$5, on the understanding that he would vote the Democratic ticket. After the election was over the Democratic heeler discovered that Sambo had voted the Republican ticket, and naturally he was very indignant. When the Democratic heeler

met Sambo he asked him why, in view of the fact that he had received only \$3 from the Republican party, whereas the Democratic party had given him \$5, he had voted the Republican ticket. "Well, sah," replied Sambo, "I want to vote in the best interest of my country, so I done figger this yar thing out for myself, an' I come to the conclusion that you is more corrupt than the Republican."

It is generally conceded that our politics are more or less corrupt, the question before the house is: "How can we cure political corruption?" We cannot cure it by drawing a garment of self-righteousness about ourselves and refusing to take any part in public life. So long as good people are content to sit cozily at home, so long as the preachers stick to the gospel and refuse to meddle in the dirty pool of politics, so long as we are content to leave politics to the saloon keepers, gamblers, ward heelers and professional politicians, we must expect to be shocked by exposures of graft and corruption.

#### Reformers Baffled.

But corruption is not the only thing we have to contend with.

We have learned by bitter experience that our present system of government is one by which we can secure the least amount of good with the greatest amount of effort. The temperance forces in this province had a sharp lesson on this aspect of the case last spring. Our good friends prepared a petition containing 20,000 signatures, asking the local government to take a referendum vote on the question of "banishing the bar." After these signatures had, with much labor and hardship, been obtained the petition was presented to the government. What happened then?—Nothing.

Is not this another proof of the truth of Charles Dickens' statement that the whole science of government is "How not to do it"?

#### Special Privilege Rules.

Instances galore could be quoted to show how reformers are baffled and necessary reforms delayed by our uncontrolled system of representative government. Perhaps I should not say uncontrolled, because the government is controlled, but is not controlled by the great mass of the people. It is controlled by a few of the people and operated by them for their own benefit. Special privilege is in the saddle, and the majority of our politicians are mere puppets in the hands of the beneficiaries of privilege. Wealth rules and the people are helpless. Laws

rob the poor and rich men rule the law in this and in most other countries.

Our politicians are not our servants, they are the hirelings of special privilege. At election time we do not engage a new set of servants, we elect a new set of overseers to rule over us for their own benefit and for the benefit of their lords and masters. The liquor men, the land speculators, the railroad magnates, the bankers, and the beneficiaries of the tariff are the real rulers of this country; and we shall never obtain any great reform until we wrest the powers of government from their hands and place that sovereign power in the hands of the people.

#### Elections a Farce.

This we propose to do by means of Direct Legislation, consisting of the Initiative, Referendum and the Recall.

Our present system of conducting elections is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory. One man is usually brought forward by each of the two grand old political parties, and we have to vote for one of them.

A political candidate is a bag of mystery, and it is almost impossible to determine beforehand whether he will represent you or misrepresent you after he has been elected. They usually recommend themselves most highly, and we try to choose what we believe to be the lesser evil; and spend the time until the next election wondering whether we succeeded or failed in accomplishing our purpose.

#### "Only One, Thank 'eaven."

I am sure a great many of you have experienced difficulty in picking the right man, and on that account will sympathize with the English voter who, during the last election, was gazing at the pictures of the rival candidates on a hoarding, when he was approached by one of the canvassers, who commenced to talk to him in this strain: "Don't you think Mr. Jones is a nice looking gentleman. Don't you think he would make a good member for this constituency? Won't you promise to vote for Mr. Jones?" To all of these interrogations the English voter replied: "I don't know nothin' about none of 'em, but I thank 'eaven as only one of 'em can get hin."

"Oh," someone will immediately say, "you don't have to vote for the man. You have the party platform to guide you, so that you really know what you are voting for." It has been said that party platforms are like railroad platforms, only made to get in upon, but, even if the party is absolutely honest and means to

carry out every pledge in its platform, it is still a very unsatisfactory way of voting. There may be 20 planks in the platform, 11 of which you favor and 9 to which you are opposed, therefore in trying to get the 11 things you do want you have to vote for the 9 things you don't want.

If you were to ask your tailor to make you a black serge coat and vest, and he were to tell you that he could only do so on condition that you also bought a pair of red overalls and a tam o'shanter hat, you would think he had a queer way of doing business.

If you were to go into a restaurant and ask for chicken, and the waiter should say, "Oh, yes, we can supply you with chicken, but you will have to take a little dog's meat with it." You would think that an insane proposal.

#### What the Proposal Is.

Were we to accept these strange proposals we would be acting any more foolishly than we do when we vote for a political party and vote for a lot of things we don't want to try to get something we want. To remedy this unsatisfactory condition of affairs we propose to improve our system of government by the introduction of Direct Legislation. Direct Legislation means law-making by a direct vote of the people. It consists of the Initiative, Referendum, and the Recall. The Initiative is a measure by which a certain percentage of the voters, usually 8 per cent., may initiate a law by means of a petition. If, upon the presentation of the petition the legislature refuses to pass the law it must be submitted to all the voters at the polls for their approval or rejection. For example, let us take the position presented to the government last year asking for a referendum vote on the question of banishing the bar. If Direct Legislation had been in force in this province the government would have been compelled to refer that question to the people and to abide by their decision. The Initiative is a measure by which the people can start legislation, the Referendum is a measure by which the people can stop legislation. Where the referendum is in force all laws are suspended for a period of time after they have been passed by the legislature, usually for 90 days. If during that time a certain percentage of the voters, usually 5 per cent., petition that any particular law be referred to the people at the polls for their approval or rejection before it comes into force, it must be so done. The principal advantage of

the referendum is that it gives the people the power to prevent the bartering away of public lands and public franchises to private corporations, thus destroying the power of the lobby and tending to purify our public life.

#### Fire the Crooks.

The Recall is a measure by which the voters may discharge a dishonest or incompetent public servant without waiting for the expiration of his term of office. No farmer would think of engaging a hired man, no business man would think of engaging a clerk, without reserving the right to discharge such employee if he were dishonest or incompetent. In private business the agent is always responsible to the principal; in public business this relation is not maintained. We elect certain men to office, and, in effect we say to them: "We give you absolute control over our public business. If you are dishonest or incompetent, if you squander the public money and the public land, if you fail to give us satisfaction, at the end of your term of office we will turn you out and put another set of men in with power to do exactly the same thing all over again. The man who gives another man absolute power of attorney over his estate is headed for the bankruptcy court, and the community which trusts its property in the hands of uncontrolled representatives is headed in the same direction. We therefore propose that 15 per cent of the voters in any constituency shall have the power to demand by petition that their representative stand for re-election if he is not giving satisfactory service. It is sometimes argued that the Recall would be used by the opposition to harass the government in power. In support of this argument it is contended that you can always find 15 per cent of the voters who are opposed to the sitting member. It can be proved that the Recall is not liable to be misused in this manner. If an attempt were made to recall a man without a good reason he would almost certainly be re-elected. The voters knowing this would be chary about signing a recall petition unless there was a good reason why they should do so. Even blind partisans do not like to be the laughing stock of the community, and they certainly would be that if they unsuccessfully attempted to recall the sitting member.

If a man can be defeated in a recall election it proves that he has ceased to represent that constituency, and it is therefore meet and just that he should cease to hold office.

### How the Recall Operates.

The city of Seattle has furnished us with the best example of the Recall in action. In December, 1909, Hiram C. Gill was elected to be the mayor of that city. He took a trip to Alaska in the summer of 1910. While he was away a green young councilman was made acting mayor. This young man soon revealed a whole mass of graft and corruption in connection with the dive, gambling dens and saloons which was going on with Hiram C. Gill's full knowledge and consent. The exposure created a great hubbub, wires were sent to Alaska, Mayor Gill returned post haste, but he was too late to cover up his tracks. A recall petition was circulated, in spite of a fierce fight by the mayor and his friends an election was held last February, and Mayor Hiram C. Gill was elected out of office.

The majority against Gill was a very large one, proving conclusively that the people were thoroughly dissatisfied with his actions, but if they had not had the power of Recall he would have remained in office for another year.

It is only fair to say that the women of Seattle voted for the first time in that election, and their votes were largely responsible for the defeat of Hiram C. Gill.

George W. Dilling was the man who succeeded to the mayor's chair. An attempt has since been made by the friends of ex-Mayor Gill to recall the present mayor, but they could not obtain sufficient signatures to enable them to demand an election.

This is a valuable practical proof that the people are not apt to abuse the Recall. We believe that if we had the Recall in this country it would have a good effect upon the behaviour of our legislators.

### Misrepresentative Government.

One of the commonest objections to direct legislation is that it would do away with representative government. We contend, on the contrary, that it would establish representative government.

We maintain that our present system is not in any sense of the term representative. Under a true system of representation the different parties and vocations would be represented in parliament in about the same proportion that they exist in the community, this is far from being the case at the present time.

The following figures speak for themselves on this phase of the question:

Manitoba legislature, 41 members. Cons.: 38,202 voters, 28 members. One member for 1,384 votes. Libs., 37,034

voters, 13 members. One member for 2,348 votes. Labor, 2,000 voters; Socialists, 1,300; no members.

### Dominion House.

Manitoba, 10 members, Cons.; 40,456 voters, 8 members. One member for 5,057 votes. Libs., 34,727 voters, 3 members. One member for 17,363 votes. Ind., 2,553 voters, no members.

With regard to representation of vocations, the situation is equally bad, e.g., the members-elect of the new parliament include 76 lawyers. Other callings will be represented as follows: Farmers 36, merchants 32, doctors 21, manufacturers 17, lumbermen 10, journalists 8, notaries 7, law students 1, labor men 1, live stock exporters 1, stockbroker 1.

(The figures given above are approximately, but not absolutely correct.)

A referendum vote would reflect the real opinion of the community, the power of factions would be minimised and the common sense of most would prevail.

### Mob Rule.

It is to be regretted that some men in places of authority have seen fit to designate Direct Legislation as "mob rule." These men have the aristocratic point of view—they are afraid to trust the people. I can understand why dishonest politicians and selfish plutocrats oppose Direct Legislation; it is because they profit by the present system; but I am somewhat puzzled by the opposition of those good people who honestly believe in aristocratic government.

Their argument is based on the supposition that the people are unfit for self-government.

If men are not fit to govern themselves how can they be trusted to govern others? If men are not capable of deciding upon the merits of a law, how can they be capable of deciding upon the merits of a law-maker, or a pot pourri of laws hashed up in a party platform?

If the wisdom and intelligence of the mob is such a negligible quantity why do the politicians so frequently appeal to "the intelligence of the magnificent audience" when they wish to be once more honored with the confidence of the mob? Is the mob only afflicted with wisdom spasmodically when it is called upon to decide between candidates and parties at election times? I think not. . . I believe that men outside of parliament are, on the average, endowed with just as much brains and common sense as the men inside of parliament, and are on the whole quite capable of managing their own affairs.



### Fooling the People.

As Abraham Lincoln once said: "You can fool all the people some of the time, you can fool some of the people all the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time." Personally, I think that most men exhibit more judgment and common sense when they are voting on by-laws than they do when they are voting for men or parties.

Shall the people rule or shall the people be ruled? are the first two questions in the catchism of Democracy. If a man believes the people should be ruled he is an aristocrat, if he believes the people should rule he is a democrat. This distinction holds good no matter what kind of clothes a man may be wearing. I have met aristocrats dressed in corduroy, and democrats robed in silk. Let the people rule. History teaches, and experience proves, that it is dangerous to trust the absolute power of government in the hands of a few uncontrolled men.

It is because law-making power has been so far removed from the people that social progress has been so slow.

### The Wisdom of the People.

The beneficiaries of privilege have been able to prevent reforms because they have had to deal with the agents of the people, and not with the people themselves. How important it is that progress should rest with the people free of hindrance from their rulers is clearly brought out in this fine passage from Buckle:

"No great political improvement, no great reform, either legislative or executive, has ever originated in any country by its rulers.

"The first suggesters of such steps have invariably been bold and able thinkers, who discern the abuse and denounce it, and point out how it can be remedied. But long after this is done, even the most enlightened governments continue to uphold the abuse and reject the remedy."

Wendell Phillips says: "No reform, moral or intellectual, ever came from the upper classes of society. Each and all came from the protest of the martyr and the victim. The emancipation of the working people must be achieved by the working people themselves."

I could easily multiply these quotations, but they are sufficient for my purpose, and I will now ask you to bear with me while I read a few opinions upon the question of Direct Legislation.

Rev. Lyman Abbott: "In my judgment the remedy for the evils of democracy is more democracy; a fresh appeal from

the few to the many; from the managers to the people. I believe in the referendum, and, within limits, the initiative, because it is one form of this appeal from the few to the many."

Frances E. Willard: "I believe in direct legislation, and think it is so greatly needed that language cannot express the dire necessity under which we find ourselves. The reign of the people is the one thing my soul desires to see; the reign of the politician is public ignominy. I also believe that direct legislation is certain to become the great political issue in the near future. The people are being educated by events. They are coming to see there is no hope for reform under the existing system of voting."

Samuel Gompers: "All lovers of the human family, all who earnestly strive for political reform, economic justice, and social enfranchisement, must range themselves on the side of Direct Legislation."

Lord Salisbury: "I believe that nothing could oppose a bulwark to popular passion except an arrangement for deliberate and careful reference of any matter in dispute to the votes of the people, like the arrangements existing in the United States and Switzerland."

Prof. Lecky, author of "Democracy and Liberty," "History of European Morals," etc., says: "The referendum would have the immense advantage of disentangling issues, separating one great question from the many minor questions with which it may be mixed. Confused or blended issues are among the greatest political dangers of Switzerland. The experience of Switzerland and America shows that when the referendum takes root in a country it takes political questions, to an immense degree, out of the hands of wire pullers and makes it possible to decide them mainly, though not perhaps wholly, on their merits, without producing a change of government or party predominance."

### A Practical Proposition.

It is always more interesting to hear about what a thing has done than what a thing will do, so I will now briefly sketch the history of Direct Legislation, and call your attention to some of the results that have been accomplished by it. The origin of Direct Legislation is lost in the mists of antiquity. While mankind were in a tribal state it was customary to make all laws by the actual voice of the people. I will not tarry with the ancients because I am anxious to deal more particularly with the modern progress of Direct Legislation. In the

year 1850 Martin Rittinghauser, a German, published a series of articles on this subject, which were afterwards collected and published in book form. This is the earliest book we know of on the subject, but long before this book was published, the Swiss people were using the Initiative and Referendum.

The real origin of the referendum idea appears to be lost in the misty past, but historians have traced it as far back as the open-air parliament of the fifth canton of Uri, of which the capital is Altdorf, in the heart of the Alps. That also was the birthplace of the Swiss confederation, dating back to 1291.

The referendum in its present form, however, is a comparatively modern institution and existed in 1848 in the cantons of Valais and Grisons, but strange to say, in the original canton of Uri it was suppressed in that year by the consent of both political parties, who probably found it a two-edged sword, cutting both ways and injuring each in turn.

In accordance with the principle that the people have a right to participate in the political life of the confederation, the referendum was formally made part of the revised Swiss constitution of 1874. Article 89 of the constitution states that all laws passed by the federal chambers shall be submitted for the approval of the people if a demand be made to that effect by 30,000 citizen-electors or by eight cantons.

During the past 37 years of trial, the referendum has shown there is no desire among the majority of the public for hasty or partisan legislation, yet when a change—even a revolutionary change—has been placed before them and carefully explained, they have been ready to adopt it, sometimes against their own interests. There was a notable instance in 1906, when they adopted the military law extending the annual obligatory service of recruits in the army from 45 to 65 days, thereby increasing the military budget by \$2,000,000 per annum.

The records show that the referendum does not unduly relieve the Swiss parliament of its legislative responsibilities. From 1848 to 1909, although hundreds of bills became law, there were only thirty occasions when a referendum was called for. Eleven measures were thus approved by the people and nineteen were rejected. One of the last and most important tests in Switzerland was in 1907, and concerned the prohibition and sale of absinthe, the "sky of Europe." Of 890,000 electors representing a population of nearly 4,000,000, 241,000 voted for prohibition and 138,000 against, so after the lapse of a

year the measure became law. The voting on that occasion occupied forty-eight hours, and took place throughout the country on a Saturday and Sunday, as required by law, the entire cost being less than \$5,000.

It is sometimes argued that "Direct Legislation might work all right in Switzerland, but it would not work in Canada with its mixed population and religious differences."

The following figures showing the different languages and religious sects in Switzerland completely refute that argument by destroying its major premise:

#### Switzerland.

Population in 1900—3,315,443.

Language:— German, 2,319,105; French, 733,220; Italian, 222,247; (Rumonsch) Romansch, 38,677.

Religion:—Protestants, 1,916,157; Roman Catholics, 1,379,664; Jews, 12,364.

The results of Direct Legislation have fully justified the predictions of its advocates, and in those communities where it is in force the majority of those who opposed its introduction are now in favor of it.

Fifty years ago the Swiss people were just as badly ridden by the political bosses and the corporations as we are in this country at the present time. But since they have obtained Direct Legislation they have dethroned those modern tyrants and put the people in the seat of power. They have nationalized their railways, telegraphs and telephones, so that these public utilities are now operated for the service of the people and not for private gain. They have conserved their great natural water powers instead of allowing them to fall into the hands of greedy exploiters and speculators.

Instead of paying exorbitant rates to express companies for carrying small parcels, as we do, the Swiss people have a government parcels post, which carries the parcels at cost. These are only a few of the practical benefits the Swiss people have achieved by means of Direct Legislation.

All of the Swiss cantons, except Fribourg, use the Initiative and Referendum in their local governments.

Fribourg enjoys the unenviable reputation of containing the only political boss in Switzerland. I mention this to show that political corruption is not governed by geographical boundaries, that given the same opportunities the same political corruption will prevail.

Unprejudiced men who have gone to Switzerland to investigate this question

upon its merits tell us that, with the exception of Fribourg, the Swiss people enjoy what seems to us a dream—pure politics.

But Switzerland is not the only country in which this progressive form of law-making is making headway. Lord Balfour of Burleigh suggested it as a way out of the controversy over the House of Lords, which was recently raging in Great Britain.

#### Other Countries.

It is true he would have left the calling of the Referendum to the members of parliament, whereas we would vest that power in the people.

The New Zealand and Australian governments have on several occasions used the referendum as a means of ascertaining the will of the people on proposed laws.

In Canada we make use of the Referendum to a large extent in municipal affairs, and sometimes take a plebiscite in provincial or federal affairs.

The referendum is a grown-up plebiscite. Our legislators may disregard the will of the people as expressed by plebiscite, a law passed by the referendum cannot be rejected by our legislators. The plebiscite is a blank cartridge, the referendum is a ball cartridge. The Initiative is an extension of the right of petition, making it obligatory upon parliament either to pass it a law or submit it to the people, when 8 per cent. of the voters demand it.

Direct Legislation has made great progress in the United States. Since 1898 ten states have adopted the Initiative and Referendum, and many of these have also adopted the Recall.

Perhaps the best example of Direct Legislation in action can be obtained from the State of Oregon.

#### Twenty-Six Important Questions Settled.

The following twenty-six important questions of public policy appear to have been definitely settled by direct vote of the people of Oregon by sixty-four proposed laws and constitutional amendments, in the last four general elections:

1. That they will not tolerate a return to anything like the convention method of making nominations, but will retain their direct primary system until something better is offered.

2. That they will enforce election by the legislature of that candidate for United States Senator in Congress who receives the highest number of the people's votes.

3. Complete prohibition of railroad passes for all persons except employees of the railroads.

4. Abolition of the power of city councils to give away public franchises.

5. Abolition of the temptation and opportunity to buy or sell votes in the legislature.

6. That the people of every city or town shall have power to make and amend their city charters on all local matters at their own pleasure, absolutely free from special acts by the legislature.

7. That they will retain the initiative and referendum in law making.

8. That they will have power to recall any elected public officer from Constable to Governor, including Judges of the courts.

9. That they approve the principle of election of members of the legislature by proportional representation, though they have not yet agreed on the method.

10. That they will provide liberally by taxes for support of higher education in the State University.

11. That they will maintain one efficient Normal School. At the same election they voted to abolish two others created by the legislature some years ago.

12. That corporations having little or no tangible property should pay a gross income and license tax.

13. That the expenditures of any candidate for public office shall be limited to practically one-fourth of one year's salary of the office he seeks, and the state will provide the greater part of the expense for publicity of the merits of candidates and of political parties.

14. That edible fish, especially salmon, shall be conserved in the navigable rivers of the state.

15. That measures of chiefly local interest will be rejected if submitted to the voters of the whole state.

16. Abolition of the convention system of electing delegates to national conventions, establishing direct election of such delegates by the voters of the great parties, and permitting expression by the voters of their choice for their party candidates for President and Vice-President.

17. That three-fourths of a jury shall be able to render a verdict in all civil cases, and court procedure shall be so simplified as to discourage appeals because of technical errors, if substantial justice has been obtained in the lower court.

18. That they do not approve state-wide prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor.

19. That they have established and will maintain local option on the liquor question.

20. That they require a reasonable measure of employers' liability for workmen's accidents.

21. They have granted the people of each county power to exempt from all taxation any class or classes of property, subject to any general laws approved by the people of the state.

22. That no citizen shall be tried in a circuit court for crime unless accused by a grand jury.

23. That general elections shall be held in November when most other states vote, instead of in June.

24. That the public credit shall not be used to aid, build or operate private or government railroads.

25. That counties may issue bonds to build permanent highways.

26. That private schemes for looting the public treasury cannot be worked by the initiative method.

In conclusion, I may say that we want Direct Legislation because:

#### Summary.

It and it only can and will destroy the private monopoly of legislative power, and establish public ownership of the government.

It will purify our public life.

It will destroy the power of the lobby. It will remove the motive for bribery and corruption.

It will diminish partizanship, elevate public questions above mere party considerations.

It will have a profound educational effect upon the people, intellectually and morally.

It is a great non-partizan reform that makes for the social and moral uplift of the whole people.

It is the open gateway to all other reforms.

It is practical. It is being successfully used in other countries, and what others can do we can do.

It is necessary to good government.

It is essential to true self-government.

It will disentangle issues and separate the men from the measures.

The fundamental principles of religion and ethics, the law of love, the Golden Rule and the brotherhood of man necessitate the Referendum. Love and brotherhood deny me the right and banish

the wish to assume more power than my fellows, or deprive them of equal participation in the development resulting from decision and responsibility.

We would not abolish the representative system of government, but we would implement it by means of Direct Legislation, in order that we may correct the political evils which now exist.

#### Politicians Not to Blame.

I have stated the case for Direct Legislation as plainly as I have been able without indulging to any great extent in the popular pastime of roasting the politicians. A story is told of a little boy who was one day crying very bitterly in the streets of Winnipeg, when a kindly stranger gently approached him and said, "Don't cry my little man, some day you may be premier of Canada." To which the boy responded, between the sobs which were shaking his tiny frame: "I must be headed that way, everybody seems to be roasting me."

If the time which is devoted to roasting the politicians were devoted to the introduction of a system which would make the roasting unnecessary, we would make more progress than we are doing.

#### The Burning Question.

It is not the men we should attack, it is the system, and we are each individually responsible for the system in so far as we allow it to exist without protest. No question has arisen within the records of history that pressed with the importance of the present. It is not whether this or that party shall be in or out, or Grit or Tory shall prevail; but whether man shall inherit his rights and universal civilization take place.

Whether the forces of democracy or aristocracy shall prevail.

No man can be neutral in this fight, "He that is not with us is against us."

We shall never obtain our rights until we conscientiously perform our duties.

We must realize that no man can obtain justice for himself alone, that in this matter it must be each for all and all for each.

Let us, then, unite under the white banner of Democracy to fight shoulder to shoulder for the common rights of humanity, for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness upon earth, in which injustice and freedom, peace and prosperity shall prevail for all the people.

For more information write

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