

majority prevail?" That is not the question at issue. The right of a majority to rule is the right of the people to manage their own affairs. About that there seems no room for difference of opinion. To hold that this right does not extend to matters outside of the province of government is not a limitation of popular rights any more than to hold as limitation of an individual's right to manage his own affairs, denial of his right to interfere with affairs of others. The best democrats of ante-bellum times refused to obey the fugitive slave law, correctly holding that the right of a black man to his liberty was beyond the just power of government to dispose of. The best democrats of today would undoubtedly defy the same law under similar circumstances. There have been and are laws and local ordinances interfering with freedom of speech or of the press. None know better than advocates of democracy that there is no inconsistency in resisting such legislation.

It may be asked "who shall determine what rights are inalienable and what are proper governmental functions?" Of course there may be difference of opinion as to whether certain rights are inalienable and whether or not certain governmental acts are within its proper powers. There is no human power to determine regarding these, and there should be none. But while there may be room for doubt about some rights and some functions, there are some rights about which there need be no doubt. If the right to life, for instance, is not inalienable, then there can be no inalienable rights at all, and even the right of the majority to rule must be without foundation. The right of a majority to rule rests on the possession by individuals of certain rights, of which the right to life must be the first one.

The Republican asserts that the doctrine of the right of all men to live "has never been accepted anywhere." Even if true, that is no reason why it should not, if properly proven, be accepted now. But it certainly was accepted on one historic occasion, at least. The acceptance by the American Colonies of the Declaration of Independence was surely an acceptance of that doctrine. Upon that doctrine, it was declared, is based the right of governments to exist "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." The argument that justified separation from the mother country would have failed to stand the test of reason, had it not been clear that all men have cer-

tain inalienable rights, including the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. S. D.

Municipal Attractions.

If the poor, who play the part of the shuttlecock in the great game of battledore and shuttlecock, ever get far enough away from their environment to look upon their situation from the outside, they must wonder at the motives of those who wield the battledore. Upon the one hand they hear the advice, get out into the country, get away from the city, go back to the land; and upon the other they see efforts made to entertain, instruct and amuse the poor of the city. Not content with parks, museums, zoological gardens, swimming beaches, and the various municipal means of recreation already in use, there have been instituted municipal dances; and it is proposed to add to these, municipal movies. Where will it all end? If we continue adding to the attractions of city life how are we to get anybody to leave the city to go on land? Or how, indeed, are we to keep those already on land from flocking to the city?

If the State really must interest itself in the private affairs of the citizen, and if there is too strong a tendency for people to leave the farm for the city, as so many near-sociologists claim, might it not be better for the State to devote more attention to making country life attractive? It was long ago remarked by investigators that the poverty of spirit, and the lack of social culture, in the average country village was greater than that in city slums; and that there was more call for social settlement work in the rural districts than in the metropolitan. City poverty is spectacular because concentrated; a like number of people thinly settled will show greater need. The very fact of the drift toward the city indicates where the greater attractions lie. S. C.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

DIRECT LEGISLATION IN NORTH DAKOTA.

Atlantic, Ia., Dec. 11, 1914.

The amendment adopted last month in North Dakota which provides for the Initiative for statutes and for the Referendum, is all that could be hoped for. But for constitutional amendments a 25 per cent petition is required. This was placed there by the prohibition element for the purpose of making it unworkable.

The Constitution of the State forbids the sale of

intoxicating drinks. Hence the prohibitionists have opposed the application of the Initiative and Referendum to the Constitution from the first. They tried again and again to get an Initiative and Referendum amendment similar to that of Maine that would allow the Initiative and Referendum only for statutes, but the liquor element fought for its application to the Constitution.

The liquor element of North Dakota has really been the agitator for the Initiative and Referendum, hoping to use it to force re-submission of the prohibitory amendment.

The prohibitionists have heretofore succeeded in defeating every amendment that would apply the Initiative and Referendum to the Constitution. I presume the liquor element has at last compromised on the present amendment, believing that it can get the 25 per cent petition necessary to re-submission.

I have no doubt it can. It has the money. If it succeeds the prohibitionists will find that they have cut off their noses to spite their faces. They had better have made the percentage 10 instead of 25.

Under the Initiative and Referendum for statutes they can get all the legislation that the people will stand for, but the 25 per cent may be a preventive of the submission of woman suffrage for many years. The woman suffrage vote this year was only about 25 per cent of the total. Still I would not be surprised to see them get a 25 per cent petition inside of two years, if the legislature refuses to act. I surely hope to.

It is a mistake to make the percentage for petitions too small, as the submission of too many propositions at once tends to the defeat of many meritorious measures at the polls. When in doubt voters, vote NO.

I lived in North Dakota from 1905 to 1909, and wrote articles for the Initiative and Referendum for local and city papers while there. I have been a believer in prohibition all my life, but I was disgusted with the action of the prohibitionists in North Dakota. I believe that the Initiative and Referendum is the true solution of that question.

HENRY HEATON.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

WHY ALCOHOL REMAINS A MONOPOLY.

Detroit, Mich., Dec. 8, 1914.

Referring to the issue of December 4, page 1157, "Mischievous Philanthropy." Much was expected from the denatured alcohol law. I attended the hearings preceding the enactment of the law, with credentials from the Michigan State Grange and the Detroit Board of Commerce. I opposed the sections that, in spite of much opposition, finally prevailed; that had the effect, as was predicted, to confine the manufacture of denatured alcohol to the large distilleries. This section by its terms prohibits distillation by farmers. The Agricultural Department at Washington now has, or did have, a fractional still, the cheapest in cost that could be used and comply with the law, on exhibition. Its cost is upwards of five thousand dollars, and even if the farmer could

handle such a complicated machine the petty amount of alcohol he is permitted to distill daily would not pay the interest and depreciation on the investment in the still, to say nothing of his time and material.

I had at the hearing the report of the English Parliamentary Committee, headed by Austin Chamberlain, made after an investigation of farmers' alcohol stills in Germany. These and other practical exhibits, from the farmers' standpoint, were submitted, but any argument that favored the farmer as a distiller met with violent opposition from attorneys representing special interests.

The government's experience in "controlling the collection of excise duties" does not indicate any difficulties at all would result if farmers were given this privilege. Those manufacturers in my line of business have in their laboratories cheap, worm stills, easy to manipulate and costing but a few dollars each. A record is made of their size, description, etc., in the local internal revenue collector's office, nothing is ever heard of these still owners and of other still owners violating the law or using the still illicitly, although we all have ample opportunity for so doing.

The same illustration also is seen in making cigars. Small villages and even rural districts without villages have little places where cigars are manufactured, but the law is not violated. There would be no difficulty should farmers be given the right to utilize the material they grow to its best advantage. If they had permission they could without the employment of skilled help or extra help, mash their fodder of low feeding value, like corn stalks, distill alcohol and get at least as much food value from the stalks to feed their live stock, for it would be in a feedable condition. The distillate would be a low percentage of alcohol, probably never over 10 to 12 per cent. This, however, could be drawn to central distilleries and rectified and denatured into fuel alcohol. The farmer cannot draw his low grade fodder to a central distillery because of the cost, but he could procure his fuel in this manner, and would become a dangerous competitor to the corporations who control liquid fuel, gasoline and denatured alcohol, for there is no limit to the alcohol that could be produced in this manner, excepting the demand.

F. F. INGRAM.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, December 15, 1914.

Departmental Reports.

In his report to Congress on December 8 Secretary of Commerce Redfield tells of investigation of commercial conditions in the United States. A survey of the pottery industry in the United States has just been completed, in the course of