

they adopt in order to restore to the American business man, farmer and laborer the abundance of good things which they did not enjoy during the benevolent dominion of William Howard Taft?

In short, the Republicans had better look sharp before they announce "prosperity" for the American people as the result of the election of another Republican to the Presidency. It was all very well to make promises of this kind at a time when "prosperity" was supposed to be the inevitable result of an indiscriminate stimulation of business activity; but of late public opinion has become extremely inquisitive as to the actual results of such stimulation. If tariff schedules are advanced, searching inquiry will be made as to the reasons which determined any particular duty, and equally searching questions will be asked about the effect of an increase upon wages in the industry. If railway rates are increased it will only be as the result of a full assurance that the increase in revenue will be used to make the carriers more efficient agencies of transportation.

These examples indicate how much more difficult and exacting the task of promoting "prosperity" has become. It can no longer be measured in terms of the gross or net earnings of railways, or the output of factories, or the export of commodities, or the increase in business enterprises. "Prosperity" is coming to mean an economic condition which really makes for popular material welfare. A party which proposes to make itself the custodian of the economic well-being of the American people cannot redeem its promises without undertaking a frankly socialistic programme of industrial reorganization.

Such in its bare outlines is the Republican dilemma. The Republican party has since its foundation assumed a paternal attitude towards American business. In seeking the support of the voters on the ground of its being the one safe guardian of the national economic interests, it has only been reiterating its historic pretensions. But the mere activity of business is no longer supposed to result in the prosperity of all classes in the community. The national economic interest must be promoted, not by granting to private business an abundance of opportunity and privilege, but by adopting effective administrative means of converting existing privileges into sources of popular economic well-being. The Republican programme will have to contain proposals, as concrete as those of President Wilson, which will look as if they were intended to accomplish really effective results. The promises made in a moment of reaction on the strength of past achievement cannot be redeemed by anything but very progressive economic legislation. For a serious attack upon the work of bringing about popular economic prosperity can result only in a more radical

Sessions in Texas

SOMETHING like a legislative strike is reported from Texas, where the members are paid five dollars a day for sixty days, and only two dollars a day if the session is extended. That arrangement is of course meant to discourage long sessions, but it has also the effect of causing members to quit work and go home. Just now, when the cotton crisis confronts the state, the tendency is found very inconvenient, and the Texas newspapers are railing at the constitutional provision.

As a means of damming that torrent of legislation which is the great American nuisance, the provision is a sorry failure. At the recent meeting of the National Bar Association it was stated that our national and state legislatures passed 62,014 statutes during the five years from 1909 to 1913. Constitutional restraints upon legislative deliberation have not seemed to diminish the output, but have rather caused it to be hasty, ill-considered, and inadequately framed.

The evil is not to be reached by such mechanical means as limitation of length of sessions. Troubles of this sort are not experienced by Swiss or English legislative bodies. Indeed, Swiss experience has shown that very brief sessions are sufficient for all practical purposes. The reason is that the thoroughly democratic organization of Swiss government has long since discarded such medieval devices as the speech from the throne, presidential messages, gubernatorial messages, etc. Swiss legislative bodies expect from the administration not windy recommendations of subjects for legislation, but the legislative projects themselves. Custom requires that bills whose passage is recommended by the administration shall be published in the official gazettes, well in advance of the legislative session. Under these circumstances public opinion is intelligently developed before the legislature meets, and sessions are brief because they get right to business. The ordinary session of the Swiss congress does not extend over three weeks, but the congress always meets twice a year and generally three times, and the sessions involve no more strain and anxiety than the meeting of a board of directors. If the administration should fail to submit a bill on a subject which in the judgment of the legislature requires attention, the regular procedure is for the legislature to pass a resolution instructing the administration to prepare the bill. Members have the right to introduce bills, but the Swiss are too sensible to hamper themselves in that way. They prefer to make the administration their agent.

The cure for such troubles as Texas complains of is to adopt modern democratic methods, despite

The Future of the Two-Party System

THE enemies of the Progressive party declare that it has been practically exterminated by the election of last week. Its candid friends cannot make a successful protest against this verdict. In certain states, such as Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas and California, its vote did indeed attain respectable dimensions. If it could count upon keeping the allegiance of its recent adherents, and of winning that of a similar proportion of the electorate in the other northern states, it would continue to be a formidable political power. It would still have a fighting chance of exercising a decisive influence on the Presidential election of 1916. But the degree of its collapse is not measured by the diminution of its proportion of the total vote. It is measured rather by its own impotence in the face of what was, on the whole, a not unfavorable political situation.

Neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties occupied at the recent election a really strong position. The Democrats could make out a perfectly good case for the obligation of supporting the Wilson administration, but excellent as their record was, it failed really to interest and convince the electorate. They barely pulled through alive. The Republicans, on the other hand, had literally no case at all. The large increase in their voting strength did not indicate any corresponding increase of Republican popular political conviction. It was the expression of a depressed inertia of opinion. The voters drifted towards Republicanism because business was bad, and because neither the candidates nor the issues offered to them an object of positive political enthusiasm. A Progressive party which was equal to its opportunity would have been able to take advantage of the prevailing apathy and offer to the voter a sufficiently attractive and compelling alternative. It failed to do so; and the failure is likely to be decisive and irreparable.

The collapse of the Progressive party does not mean, however, that any final verdict has been pronounced on the attempt to create, outside of the old parties, some kind of an effective progressive political organization. No doubt the election has bestowed a renewed strength upon the two-party system; but it is the kind of strength which an old man might derive from a day of sunshine. A large proportion of the American voters have ceased to attach much importance to partisan ties. The very election that has superficially revived the two-party system furnished an unprecedented number of states which chose one kind of a partisan for governor and another for senator. The voters are becoming

gressive. They resent the necessity of approving unworthy candidates for the benefit of partisan success. They are acquiring an increasing interest in particular plans of social and political improvement, and are ready to bolt in case their favorite ideas are repudiated or neglected. More than ever before they want a vote to mean something positive and definite—to count in favor of some beneficial social policy.

Two years ago the Progressives were incautiously comparing the birth of the Progressive party to that of its Republican predecessor. The event has apparently falsified the analogy, yet something may be said in its favor. While the Progressive party has collapsed, the older parties have not as yet shown any sufficient ability to adapt themselves to the new political demands. The anti-slavery agitation previous to the war raised an issue with which both the Whigs and the Democrats were unable to cope, because it was an issue which in the minds of the voters became too important to be compromised in the interest of partisan harmony. The progressive movement has gradually been bestowing a similar importance upon various parts of a social and labor programme. It may be some years before the issues become sufficiently definite and controversial wholly to destroy partisan allegiance and discipline, but a strong tendency in that direction can be plainly traced.

The really important question is, however, not whether an uncompromising progressivism will ultimately alienate the voters from Democracy and Republicanism, because if Democracy and Republicanism were succeeded by some new development of the two-party system the voters would only be changing their masters. The really important question is whether progressivism in its political aspect will not destroy the two-party system itself, and substitute for it a more satisfactory method of organizing majority rule and representing the opinions of groups of American voters.

In our opinion progressivism is having and will continue to have a tendency to undermine the traditional two-party system. That system was created to meet the needs of a democracy whose conditions and ideals differed radically from the conditions and ideals of a modern democracy, and which had no social aspirations that were not sufficiently expressed in an individualistic bill of rights. It wanted to be protected against the government rather than to use the government as an instrument for the attainment of positive public ends. Moreover, the government itself as constituted was a clumsy, unruly and undemocratic piece of political machinery. The Democratic party was in the beginning an extraordinarily effective attempt to organize an extra-official demo-