

It practically puts a premium on the purchasable vote. It enables men most susceptible to the influence of money to be ascertained, approached, corrupted and silenced by the price in their pocket paid with absolute certainty that the bribe has secured the vote.

This evil, so fatal to the purity of our election, flourishes under our existing law, and all good men must agree that, if possible, it should be cured.

The repeal of the privilege in question and the substitution in its place of an enactment requiring all voters (except the blind and the physically disabled) to mark their ballots themselves will, in my judgment, go a long way towards the extinguishment of this great abuse. It is too much to hope that it will extinguish it altogether. But reform measures are not to be rejected because they will not completely accomplish their intended object, nor ought we to continue on in a passive submission to acknowledged evils because we cannot cure them entirely.

THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THIS PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

The necessity of these proposed reforms is fully admitted, but quite a number of those who do not hesitate to make this concession insist that the provisions of our State Constitution are so inflexible that this important result cannot be reached without a Constitutional amendment.

Without stopping to consider how far this suggestion is sincerely made by those who urge it, or to point out that its adoption would necessarily delay until 1903, and perhaps until 1905, the desired relief, I am unwilling to believe that the Constitution can stand as an obstacle in the way of such a meritorious and imperative measure of reform.

In this belief I acted in calling you together, and the full public discussion of the subject in the press within the last few weeks has strengthened me in my conclusion that there is not to be found in the Constitution any prohibition of the contemplated amendments.

THE REGISTRATION LAW.

Scarcely inferior to these important amendments, the adoption of which will assuredly largely rescue our elec-