

At no period in our history have we had greater cause for congratulation on our condition as a State than at this moment. Through the direct instrumentality of the sovereign power, the organic law has been re-molded, and given to us in the form of a Constitution, in which the strong and leading principles consistent with the spirit of the age and the genius of our civil institutions have been liberally recognised. The toils and struggles of years gave birth to the instrument under which we are now living. The first demand by the people for a reformed constitution had my earnest sympathies, and the result of their work has my approval and support.

But while every true friend to a more liberal constitution has good reason to rejoice in the ultimate triumph which crowned their exertions, and although many of the anti-republican features of our former system have given place to those better suited to the times, much remains to be done. The new constitution has broadly and unequivocally recognised the "inalienable right" of the people to amend, alter, or abolish their form of Government, whenever in their judgment it has failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was intended; and fixed stated periods for ascertaining the public will. It has approximated more nearly to the sound principle of representation according to population; and thereby enlarged the area of human rights; it has given to the people the privilege of electing a still larger number of their own officers, and thus increased greatly their direct interest and responsibility in the affairs of Government; it has thrown open the prison doors to the honest and helpless debtor and bid him go free; it has cast around the Legislature wholesome restrictions to guard against extravagance in the expenditure of public money, and the creation of public debt, it has established sound precautions and wise penalties against an unholy exercise of the right of suffrage; it has deprived the Legislative branch of the Government (elected for other purposes and without direct instruction from the public voice) of all power to alter or abridge any constitutional provision; it has done these and many other things, to which the public heart as well as the public judgment has cordially responded, and yet much is left for energetic legislation to accomplish.

The assembled wisdom of that body, the Reform Convention—one which shed a rich lustre upon the bright character of our State through the giant minds it numbered—could not give to the new constitution that vitality which it required by subsequent legislation. They left their work—not perfect—but well done. That the new constitution in itself, as it came from their hands, was a triumphant redemption in the main of the pledges of the reformers, and deserved the emphatic confirmation it received through the ballot box, few if any are now prepared to deny; but the Legislature, which has since its adoption been engaged in the preparation of the necessary measures to give it force, though they have accomplished much, have not yet done all that is required.

In relation to the elective judiciary, where the strong doubts