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THE WISCONSIN IDEA

(An Address delivered by Professor Eugene A. Gilmore, Professor of Law, University of Wisconsin, and Non-Resident Professor of Law, University of the Philippines, at a Reception given in his honor by Justice George A. Malcolm, on January 19, 1918, University Hall.)

I have been asked to speak of the so-called "Wisconsin Idea." To one coming from Wisconsin it is always a matter of surprise, and of course, of gratification, to find that apparently a great many people elsewhere are interested in the experiments in government which we have been making and that this interest has prompted some to visit the State and others to make inquiries concerning our activities.

Far be it from me or from anyone of my State to assert that Wisconsin has solved the complex and difficult problems of government or has successfully laid the foundation for the early arrival of the millenium. The chief merit to which we lay claim is that we have had the faith and courage to try experiments in government and have endeavored through a democracy to accomplish results which to us seem fitted to promote the welfare of the State.

We realize quite readily that the last word in government has not been said. We do not claim to have discovered a political theory which will cure all the social and economic ills of the race.

In what I shall say I will endeavor to explain merely what is meant by the expression, the "Wisconsin Idea". I shall not advocate nor defend it.

In this exposition I shall state first in general terms the political philosophy which seems to pervade the legislation of the past fifteen years and then give a concrete account of some of the more important of this legislation, recognizing very readily that what I shall say will to many seem old and familiar. In fact, from what I have learned since my arrival here, it seems that some of you are already familiar with the Wisconsin Idea and have shown your appreciation and approval of it by adopting some of the things which we in Wisconsin have started.

So far as it is possible to express in a single sentence the meaning of the phrase—the Wisconsin Idea—it is this: Realism in democracy. This involves a belief in democracy as the desirable form of social organization. It also involves a belief in the capacity of the people to make democracy a reality. Government is of the people; it belongs to them as their collective instrumentality. Government is by the people; this instrumentality is to be exercised by the people directly or through

their legally and intelligently chosen representatives. Government is for the people; it exists not for the interest of any class, even though that class should per chance be numerically large, but for the interest of all, and for no other purpose. Each for all and all for each! The best individualism comes through the best collectivism. The individual attains his highest development and his permanent welfare when the rights and interests of all are recognized and secured. The state is a necessary good; not a necessary evil. The welfare of the individual can be secured and promoted through the state; it is not hindered nor imperiled. Business and human welfare can exist and develop side by side.

Order, intelligence, care and thought can be exercised by the state for the promotion of the individual and of the collective welfare. The individual is entitled to this opportunity, the state can secure and protect this opportunity. It is the right of the individual to acquire and enjoy the fruits of his efforts; but the state is bound to establish laws of acquisition which look to the good of all and do not permit the plunder or exploitation of any. Equal rights to all and special privileges to none is a political philosophy which can be consistently and successfully put into practice by the state. The essence and spirit of democracy is equality.

But the striking characteristic of nature is inequality and diversity. Men are unequal in capacity and in development. Shall the state by law attempt to contradict and correct the inequalities that exist by nature? Not at all. The inequalities of nature are not to be equalized, but the state is to see that these inequalities are not accentuated to a degree inimical to the general welfare, and productive of caste and privilege.

Nor are the inequalities of fortune to be equalized, but the state must see that such inequalities are not accentuated to such a degree as to result in the total deprivation or unreasonable restriction of opportunity in the many and the exploitation of the many by the few. There is a limit to free play. By a wise system of compensations and adjustments the state must secure a fair field for all. More fundamental and basic, however, is this proposition: that the state shall not by special privileges and immunities artificially create inequalities, nor thereby accentuate naturally existing inequalities in capacity or fortune.

The Wisconsin Idea is not socialism. It is not collectivism nor is it paternalism. It is the highest order of individualism,—a new individualism, giving full play to the personal qualities of initiative, thrift and enterprise, but requiring that they be exercised with due regard to similar qualities in every other member of the community. Each according to his capacity, but no one is to be crushed or exploited.

The adjustment of the social and industrial relations so that each individual may have an opportunity to realize his own best development and enjoy the fruits of his own industry is indeed a delicate task for the state to undertake. This is especially so when it is realized that the problem involves the avoidance of two very undesirable things: the undue suppression of the capable, virile, and energetic, on the one hand and the molly-coddling and pampering of the weak on the other.

The state must not put a penalty on sturdiness, intelligence and efficiency nor must it put a premium on indolence or inefficiency. A thoroughly individualistic régime where each one is left to his own resources and ingenuity, where the strong may live and the weak must die, is an undesirable extreme. Likewise a thoroughly paternalistic régime where the weak and incapable are cared for and struggle and adversity of life is unduly mollified is to be avoided. It should be recognized that there is as much danger in a social organization devoid of reasonable opportunity for the masses as in an organization where opportunity is frequent and conditions too easy. As the economist John Stuart Mill said: "Energy and self-dependence are liable to be impaired by the absence of help as well as by its excess. It is even more fatal to exertion to have no hope of succeeding by it, than to be assured of success without it."

Some help, some readjustment, some equalization is needed in order to insure to intelligent and honest effort a reasonable chance of success. A social order in which by nature or by artificial means the conditions between men have become so unequal as to offer little or no prospect of success to the activities of the mass is inevitably a decadent one. When the land, the natural resources, the wealth, the franchises, and the privileges of government become vested in the hands of the few, and thereby inequality of social and economic condition becomes excessive, the individual ceases to strive, and becomes a subservient vassal upon the estate of the few who have. No man will run the race unless he has or thinks he has a fair chance of winning, if not the first place, at least a place. Moreover, if he runs repeatedly and always loses, if nothing comes from his efforts, he will cease to run. Government is bound to concern itself with the opportunity and efficiency of the individual; it must aid and encourage him to develop his efficiency; it must secure and safeguard his opportunity. The government must do this, not as a government aloof from and above the people—a benevolent autocracy handing down a boon, but as a government of the people originating with and proceeding from them.

The activities of this government of the people must be pervaded by the idea that the welfare of the state is the welfare of the individual—not of any special group or class, but of all of them. Real rights, real opportunities, not theoretical ones, must be guaranteed to the individual. The state must create no inequalities, and it must remove those inequalities, whether natural or artificial, which give to one class an undue advantage over another. The position of the strong and the weak must be so equalized that each may live and let live.

In securing and safeguarding the individual's opportunity, in making reasonable adjustments and compensations, the state need not become paternalistic. Giving a man an opportunity to get something is quite different from giving him the thing itself. He has yet to run the race, he has yet to make the effort. If he gets anything from his opportunity he must couple with it his own energy, efficiency, industry and application. The state does not guarantee any results; it does not insure a living; it grants no immunity from labor and struggle. Only to the industrious, frugal and efficient will come results.

The political philosophy set forth in the foregoing statement contains nothing new or startling. It will be recognized by any student of political science. Most persons will readily subscribe to it. Moreover, most persons will say that this statement contains the political creed which is generally professed in all of the states of the American Union. But profession is one thing and practice is another. The Wisconsin Idea is to prove, or at least constantly to strive to prove, this political faith by works,— to make it real and living, to embody it in specific legislation.

What I have said will suffice for an abstract statement of the significance of the Wisconsin Idea. But the philosophy of a state can best be seen in the laws it enacts and the spirit in which they are administered. A brief account of some of the more important legislation will disclose this philosophy.

The legislation may in a general way be divided into two classes:

- (1) That which has to do with electoral and governmental subjects, and,
- (2) That which deals with substantive enactments seeking to embody concretely certain economic and social theories. I shall speak first and more particularly of the first class.

It was found in Wisconsin, as it will be found in any state, that wealth and privilege were tending to concentrate and that such concentration tended to produce conditions of political and economic inequality detrimental to democratic government and general individual welfare.

So many of the legitimate functions of the state, such as the building and operating of the railways and of the public utilities, had been entrusted into private hands that the wealth, power, and talent of the community was in danger of being arrayed against the government and the masses. The state was tending to become the government of the few, by the few, for the few. To restore the government to the people, to make them politically free and independent was the first important task. This involved certain changes in the electoral and governmental machinery.

It is true in Wisconsin, as in any community, that if the people are educated and are given reasonable opportunity to express their judgment, they can be depended upon the conduct of their government fairly and efficiently. Too often, however, they do not control and are not politically free. There is often an extra-legal body, outside and apart from the formal government, which is the real government. We call it the government by the "boss", the "machine", "big business", the "interests."

This lack of control by the people of their own government was thought in Wisconsin to be due largely to two things: (1) The convention system of selecting candidates for public office, and (2) the complicated form of the governmental machinery whereby it is impossible or very difficult to locate responsibility.

With regard to the convention system, its operation was such as to put into the hands of a few the determination of who should run for public office and what the issues should be. The railroad and public utility corporations and certain large business interests were able to control or unduly influence, the nominating

conventions. The delegates to these conventions were chosen in local caucuses with little publicity and participated in by few, and usually by those who had some special interest to guard or promote. The result was a body of delegates especially susceptible to control. It was a situation very favorable to the development of the political boss. Every one who is familiar with the history of American politics, or with the politics of any country where democracy exists, knows that the boss and his "machine" did develop and wax strong. No man could hope to be successful in gaining public office who had not the approval of the boss. Aspiring politicians went not to the people for support but to the party boss, and the party boss was unfortunately too often identified with the special interests.

It was thought that the best remedy for this situation was a primary election law. This was passed in 1903. No one would claim for it perfection. It has probably been more examined, criticized and discussed than any other of its kind. Whether it is the best solution or a complete solution of the evil no one in Wisconsin would assert without qualification. The evil pointed out above was a real one; some remedy was needed, Wisconsin has tried this remedy, and will continue to experiment until the best remedy is found. The experience thus far has convinced most people that the remedy is effective, and that good results are being attained. So far as the legislature is concerned, while there may not be so many men of distinctive ability elected, still there is very commendable average of ability and one feels that the body is made up of politically free and independent members responsive to community interests.

The Wisconsin Act provides for an absolutely direct state-wide compulsory system of nomination for all public elective officers, with a few exceptions not necessary to notice now. It abolishes the caucus. There is no voting for delegates of any kind. The voting is by secret ballot. Moreover it is an open primary; that is, there is no test of party affiliation. There is only one primary for all parties. A voter at the time he votes decides with which party he will vote, regardless of what his previous affiliations may have been. This feature has been much criticised, since it does admit of the possibility of the members of one party combining on a weak candidate in another party and thus securing his nomination. In practice the criticism does not seem well founded, and all proposals for a change have been defeated. Under the primary system no man need ask the permission from any local boss or organization to run for office. If he can convince a sufficient number of voters in his district to believe in him and in his policies he is entitled to a place on the official primary election ballot.

In order to make it reasonably sure that a successful nominee will represent the policies of the majority of his party there is provided a plan for second choice nominations. This tends to prevent the scattering of votes and the nomination of a minority candidate.

Another piece of legislation having for its object the restoration of the government to the people is the Corrupt Practices Act. Such legislation is not original

with Wisconsin. England and a number of the American states have such acts. But the Wisconsin Act has certain characteristics which make it different from other acts and which disclose what is fundamental underlying the Wisconsin Idea. The following description by Dr. Charles McCarthy, of the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Library, is apt:

"It was constructed not only with the thought of restricting the use of money but also with the idea, so often used in Wisconsin Acts, of insuring equality of opportunity. Taking the Oregon scheme of using a pamphlet before the public as a basis to get the candidate's platforms, it has developed a law with a certain philosophy underlying it. The philosophy may be outlined as follows: there should be equality of opportunity in running for or in holding office; if this is denied, there arises a governing class able to control election to office through money expended and there remains a large class which is seldom represented among candidates for office. It is the duty of the state therefore, to equalize conditions by not only restricting the amount of money which can be spent by the man of wealth, but also to equalize conditions still further by putting means into the hands of the poorer man, whereby his ideas may be placed before the whole people".

The nature and theory of the law is well brought out by the following statement of Senator A.W. Sanborn, formerly of the Wisconsin legislature:

"The use of money as a factor in determining the qualifications of a man to hold a public office, is fundamentally wrong. It is necessary for each voter to have sufficient information, in order for him to determine intelligently to whom his support shall be given. What information is necessary? How shall this information be furnished? Each voter should know who the candidate is, for what principles he stands, and what his record has been. This information should be furnished and placed in the hands of each voter at public expense. The reason for this is that our government is not based upon property qualifications for voting or for holding office. It is based upon manhood suffrage; equality before the law; equality in opportunity; equality in voting power. The elector is selecting a public servant to perform public duties and if the elector makes a mistake in this selection, he must bear the burden. It is a public duty he is performing, and the entire commonwealth is interested in having each elector receive sufficient information to perform that duty intelligently and well. The qualifications of two men being equal, the power of one with a large amount of money to spend, should be no greater, in securing votes, than the one without money. The amount of money that one has to spend does not add one iota to his qualifications to hold office.* * * The state is interested in securing the services of the man who is best qualified to hold office. not the man who alone has the most money. If the best qualified man is poor and unable to place in the hands of the voter the necessary information, he cannot be a candidate and hence the state is deprived of his services.

How can this be remedied? (1) Deprive the rich man of some of his powers; do away with his property qualifications as far as possible; make him stand on his real qualifications for office. (2) Let the state aid the man who has no money to assert the power he should have to give him equality in opportunity.

In other words, let the state regulate the power of the rich man by depriving him of the right to use his money in securing office, and aid the poor man so as to place him as nearly as possible on an equality."

The Corrupt Practices Act specifically defines the objects for which money may be spent, limits the amount to be expended, whether by a candidate or a committee, and requires a detailed public report as to all expenditures. The maximum amount which any candidate may expend shall not exceed one-fourth of one year's salary of the office which he seeks.

There is another interesting feature of this Act. If candidates are limited as to the amount of money which may be spent for pamphlets and circulars, and notwithstanding this one man is using a newspaper through his financial interest, control or otherwise, equality before the law is practically violated. To prevent this it is provided that no newspaper or periodical shall publish for hire any matter intended to influence the voting at any election unless it shall print in connection with such matter, in large type the words, "Paid Advertisement," the amount paid, by whom, and on behalf of whom paid.

Also any candidate owning directly or indirectly any newspaper or periodical, or any interest therein, must file a verified public statement of such interest. Furthermore, no owner, publisher, editor, reporter or agent of any newspaper or periodical shall solicit, receive or accept any payment, promise or compensation for influencing or attempting to influence through printed matter in such paper, except in the way as provided for "paid advertisements", the voting at any election.

A very summary scheme of procedure for the prosecution of violations of the Act is also provided.

What has just been said about the undue advantage which the man with money has in seeking public office, and the need of an equalization of conditions of candidates applies likewise to the poor man who has the backing and support of large monied interests. The law seeks to prevent the expenditure of large sums of money to secure office, whether such expenditure be by a rich candidate or by a poor candidate with rich backing.

In addition to the foregoing changes in the electoral machinery, Wisconsin has adopted, in a somewhat modified and restricted form, the initiative and referendum for legislation, and the recall of certain officers. The theory and purpose of such devices are so generally understood that further comment is unnecessary.

All these changes in the electoral and governmental system have for their object the making of the government really one of the people and by the people, and thereby creating the condition of the political freedom and equality which is essential to a real democracy.

The other obstacle to the realization of substantial control of the government by the people, viz., the elaborate form of the governmental organization, has yet to be removed. There is no doubt that the great number of officers to be elected, the diversity and frequent overlapping of their jurisdiction, the numerous and intricate political subdivisions into which the state is divided, tends to confuse the voter and to make it difficult to locate responsibility. One remedy proposed, but not accepted, is the short ballot, thus providing for the election of a few officers with power to chose their assistants. The whole problem, however, is one being subjected to further study and experiment.

Very early in the conception and development of the Wisconsin Idea it was perceived that one reason why democracy does not get wise, well-framed legislation in the interests of the community was the lack of information by the legislature of the necessary facts and the possession of the facilities for the scientific drafting of laws. The railroads, the public utilities, and the special interests were always well represented before the legislative committees by competent attorneys and experts. These agents had a large fund of valuable information concerning any proposed legislation and they had the facilities for drafting laws. Legislators were largely dependent upon them for information.

These agents were able by their superior knowledge and facility to exert a very potent influence in the shaping of laws, both as to substance and form. Such position of advantage no doubt explains some of the so-called "jokers" that get into laws or some of the vagaries and obscurities which frustrate the realization of the legislative will. But quite apart from any improper use of the superior knowledge or facilities by private agents, wise law-making should not depend upon what is quite largely biased sources of information.

It must be recognized that the average legislature as to methods of procedure and the handling of business is a very incompetent body, and the Wisconsin legislature was no exception. There was a very great absence of systematic procedure for the drafting, introduction and consideration of bills. There was no organized method of placing information on any particular bill before the legislature, nor was there any impartial or skilled assistance in drafting bills for the honest legislature who knew nothing of law. If hearings were held, no one save the lobbyists knew when or where. The conditions were rank for the growth of corruption and improper influences. The paid lobbyist was a power in legislation.

An obvious reform consisted in the establishment of a definite, orderly system for the preparation, introduction, consideration and passage of laws. One very great need was the creation of a source of reliable and unbiased information for honest legislators and the providing of expert draftsmen to formulate proper legislation. This need was met by the establishment of what has become so well known as the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Library, and by the enactment of a code of legislative procedure.

From a small beginning, the Reference Library has developed into a veritable storehouse of very practical information on every conceivable subject. Does a legislator want to know something about the subject of income taxation, debtor's exemptions, organization of schools, franchise taxation, support of paupers, or highway maintenance? He has only to apply to the Reference Library and he will be put into possession of well-arranged and well-digested material on the subject in which he is interested. This material is not such as is ordinarily found in libraries. It consists of newspaper clippings, editorials, magazine articles, pamphlets, and reports of boards and committees. The inquiring legislator will be given both sides of the question; he will be told of what has been done along similar lines in other states or countries; and copies of laws of these states or countries will be supplied. If he desires further information or any particular data it will be collected for him, statistics will be compiled, and everything needed for an intelligent judgment will be brought within his reach. Then if he wishes to embody his ideas in a law he will find at his disposal a corps of disinterested and impartial, but expert draftsmen, who will put his ideas into proper legal form for introduction into the legislature. This happy combination of an impartial information bureau and an expert drafting bureau, together with the expert advice given by members of the faculty of the State University, has been of immeasurable value in securing for the State a large part of the constructive legislation which has been realized in recent years.

In addition to the foregoing aids, there is a plan of legislative procedure which tends to secure full and adequate consideration of all proposed laws and to prevent the killing or suppression of bills in committees. The committee system is, of course, the usual one in American legislative bodies. All bills go to committees. These committees are very powerful and are often in a position to suppress meritorious legislation. To check the evils of committee control and the "killing in committee" of bills, it is provided that all parties interested in legislation must be given an opportunity to appear before the committee having the matter in charge. Every bill must be scheduled for a public hearing. A committee calendar is kept. Committee hearings are publicly posted in advance. A weekly cumulative bulletin is issued showing the exact status of every bill and its history up to the time of the publication. Each committee is required to report to the legislature on every bill in its charge, with its recommendation, and with a record of the ayes and noes on each bill.

To help in the consideration of proposed legislation on its merits, in the open light of day, free from the intrigues of darkness and secrecy, an anti-lobbying law was passed in 1905 which limits the activities of any paid lobbyist or legislative agent to oral or printed arguments presented to legislative committees or to the legislature in a body. The legislator is regarded as an impartial representative of the people; he is to hear the arguments for or against proposed legislation and is to make up his best judgment on the merits of the case, free from secret pressure or

improper influences. Lobbyists are required to register their names and the interests or corporations which they represent. These names are posted in a public place or read by the clerks of both branches of the legislature. Any person appearing for or against a bill pending before a committee must state on whose behalf he appears. At the end of the legislative session each lobbyist must make public the amount of money expended by him and the purposes of such expenditures.

There is also a statute which forbids "log-rolling" or the trading in votes by legislators, either among themselves or between legislators and the governor. In other words, it is illegal for one legislator to agree to vote for a particular measure in consideration that another legislator will vote for another measure in which he is interested.

It is frankly recognized, of course, that men cannot be made honest and efficient by law. Perfect results are never attained, but these laws represent an ideal, and give an expression to the proper attitude toward government and legislation. The foregoing legislation comprises the principal experiments to perfect the machinery of government so that democracy may be a reality rather than a theory.

Before leaving the question of governmental machinery, a few words should be said about the Wisconsin Idea concerning the office-holding class. Whenever government increases the sphere of its activities, there immediately tends to develop an office-holding class which magnifies the importance of its existence and comes to regard itself as the *end* rather than the *means* of government. A good many people are apt to think that government exists that they may have a "job" rather than that they may have a reasonable *opportunity* to apply their industry, efficiency and energy in private enterprises. The chief end and occupation of the community is not government; it is trade, commerce, industry, and agriculture. The career of the rising generation is not to be found in the holding of a government office, but in the development of efficiency in some line of commercial or productive industry.

The Wisconsin Idea, however, includes much more than the improvement of governmental machinery. Democracy requires for its realization intelligence and education in the masses. The Wisconsin Idea concerning education involves three conceptions: *First*. The democratization of learning; the making of knowledge the possession of the many rather than of the few. *Second*. The utilization of the expert knowledge of the state for the advancement of the common good. *Third*. The acceptance of the doctrine that the aim of all education is essentially altruistic.

With regard to the first conception, so far as it involves only the well recognized notion that a government should educate its people, it presents nothing new. Education as a necessary and proper function of the state is everywhere accepted as a sound political theory. Here again, however, Wisconsin has attempted to make this theory a reality. The State has always spent money freely on its primary and secondary education and on its university. But it has done more than this:

It has made its educational system in reality state-wide and all-inclusive. It has brought the means of knowledge not merely to the door of the child and the young person, but to the door of every person within the state, young and old alike.

This has been accomplished in large measure by means of the Extension Division of the State University. This Division is something more than a correspondence school for teaching a university course to persons who cannot come to the university. This is one of its important functions to be sure. But its larger function is to disseminate all information of use to individuals and to the community, to stimulate the study and investigation of subjects affecting the welfare of the state, to supply knowledge for the solution of local problems, and for the betterment of individual, social and economic conditions throughout the entire state.

The following very brief summary of the numerous activities of the Division will disclose the scope and nature of this larger function:

University Extension is the extending of the University Campus to the farthest boundaries of the State—the giving to all the people of Wisconsin educational opportunities applied to their specific needs.

The Correspondence-Study Department is an aid to securing a college education from the university—a chance to advance to better positions or more congenial occupations through education—to *learn while earning*.

The Lecture Department is the opportunity of the small and large town alike to secure lecture courses and musical entertainments of good quality at low cost.

The Debating and Public Discussion Department stimulates and aids an intelligent consideration of the problems of the day.

The General Information and Welfare Department establishes co-operation between the state university and the people for the general welfare of the communities and individuals.

It is building better communities by teaching the people to pull together.

It is helping towns to solve their numerous problems, such as water supply, sewage disposal and paving.

It is giving the local governing boards of the Wisconsin towns and villages the benefit of the experience of other cities and towns of the nation in the framing and administration of ordinances as to garbage collection, street cleaning, dance hall regulations, and other municipal problems.

It is aiding in the organization and correlation of the musical and dramatic resources of the community in producing "home talent" entertainments, thus supplying an ideal opportunity for school and community co-operation.

It is teaching the parents and school teachers the warning signs of contagious and communicable diseases among children, and the precautions that must be taken to prevent epidemics.

By means of visual instruction—moving picture reels or films—it is bringing to the communities throughout the state well selected educational films and slides, thus stimulating the intellectual life of the state and promoting an intelligent citizenship.

In the foregoing summary special attention should be called to the work of the Public Debating and Public Welfare Department. Intelligent discussion by all the people of vital public questions is essential to a successful democracy. The stimulation of such discussion and its aid is accomplished by means of the Package Library System. A package library consists of a collection of carefully chosen and well arranged material dealing with some question of interest. This material is made up of newspaper clippings, articles taken from magazines and periodicals, pamphlets and reports of boards and committees. References are also given to books and other material that may be found in the local library where the package goes.

Over two thousand topics are covered by these libraries. Some of the more important are: Income taxation, parcels post, industrial education, community play grounds, care of children, government ownership of railways, care of the poor and dependent, and probation system.

These libraries are loaned to any person in the state, whether a teacher in a local school, or to a boy in a rural debating society, a businessman seeking information on some problem of his community or a woman trying to ascertain arguments for and against woman suffrage. Whatever the question may be, these libraries are designed to give the man or woman in the small community with little or no access to libraries or books, sufficient material on which to form an intelligent judgment and to discuss the same with his fellow citizens. The service has resulted in the impartial dissemination of much valuable information and has tended greatly to create a sound public opinion on questions of vital interest to the state. Especially it is valuable to young people,—prospective voters—and trains them, by public debate and discussion, for the responsibilities which they must later assume in the affairs of their community.

It is, however, not through the extension division only that education is made available for the masses. Many other instrumentalities operate to produce the same result, such as institutes and conferences held at the University or in the local community, and special courses of short duration given in the University.

In speaking of this endeavor to make knowledge the possession of the many rather than of the few in order that there may be an electorate capable of discussing public questions and forming an intelligent opinion, the impression should not be gained that such is the only object of education. There is another object, more fundamental and significant, which we are seeking to accomplish, namely: The efficiency of the individual in all forms of trade, commerce and productive industry. The primary object of education is not to make the people intelligent voters and statesmen, important as that is; it is rather to make them efficient in industry. The state should secure and safeguard the individual's opportunity. It should also train and develop the individual so that he may be able to utilize his opportunity, and thus promote the economic prosperity of the state. To this end we are laying

special emphasis on the vocational training of farmers, artisans and craftsmen of all kinds. We believe in the dignity of labor, and that the best good of the individual and of the state is to be found in a comprehensive system of vocational education.

Another part of the Wisconsin Idea concerning education is the utilization for the benefit of the state of the knowledge and experience of its highly trained expert in their several respective fields. It was very early recognized that there was in the state, especially in the University, a great deal of expert knowledge and training which could be used in various ways for advancing the welfare of the people.

This was especially true with respect to great problems in legislation such as regulation of public utilities, taxation, reclaiming waste lands, conserving natural resources, and workmen's compensation. The University professors, experts in their respective fields, have rendered extensive and valuable service in aiding legislative committees in investigating problems and drafting laws. In the constructive legislation of the past fifteen years, the University has had a very active part. Moreover, University professors have served on the various boards and commissions which have been created to administer this legislation, such as the Railroad Commission, The Tax Commission, the Industrial Commission and the Conservation Commission.

Wisconsin is a democracy. The people believe in democracy. They believe it can be efficient. They have to a remarkable degree had the wisdom to recognize that one great danger of democracy is mediocrity, and that, to avoid this, a state should utilize the expert knowledge and experience of its highly trained citizens in solving the problems of statecraft and in the administration of its laws. It is not, however, a government of experts but it is a government of the people with the aid of experts. The people of the state have used their university as a great laboratory in which to do much of the preliminary study and investigation necessary for wise legislation and their professors have been called to take an active part in constructing and administering the laws.

With regard to the substantive legislation embodying the political philosophy above described, only some of the more important need be noticed. Moreover, as a number of these laws have been made the basis of similar legislation in other states, their scope and purpose are too generally known as to need special comment. The following may be mentioned:

The Railroad Act and the Public Utility Act. These constitute a comprehensive plan, administered by a special commission, for the regulation of common carriers and all forms of public utilities in order that the people of the state may have in these vital matters adequate service at reasonable rates and without discrimination.

Wisconsin was a pioneer in this field of legislation and other states have drawn largely from her experience. As a part of this legislation the Stock and Bond Act should be mentioned. It was designed to prevent the evil of "watered" stock and to protect the public against the payment of earnings on fictitious values.

The tax legislation covers a period of years and includes various acts providing a comprehensive system of valuation and assessment so that the expense of government may be equitably and economically distributed. Wisconsin is one of the few states that has a successful income tax law. The taxation laws are administered by a special commission. In connection with the subject of taxation it may be said that Wisconsin has no bonded indebtedness and she has just completed a seven million dollar state capitol building, not to mention other extensive public improvements.

The most important piece of industrial legislation is the Workmen's Compensation Act, designed to secure the equitable distribution of the burdens of industrial accidents. This act is administered by the Industrial Commission with large powers to provide for the safety and physical welfare of workers.

There is also legislation providing for the conservation and wise development of the natural resources of the state.

A recent act provides for the creation of a system of industrial and vocational education under the administration of a special board. The plan seeks to correlate the general education with the technical vocational training by providing a means whereby the boy or girl, while pursuing the former may also be attaining the necessary training for some trade or craft. The object is to develop an intelligent citizen and at the same time a technically efficient worker in some field of productive industry.

Sufficient has now been said to give a general conception of the content of the Wisconsin Idea. It is in brief an earnest attempt to realize democracy through an intelligent and independent electorate which is at the same time industrially and economically trained and efficient, such attempt being aided by the utilization of the expert knowledge and the best skill in the community.