

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Why is it that neither the wage-earners or farmers are represented in the National House of Representatives, nor in the Legislatures?

It is because machine rule exists. The few are in power through the convention system and the use of money. Neither the wage-earners or farmers are contributing any considerable amount of funds for political purposes. If they did the monopolists and other special privilege holders would outdo them.

The machine rule system is as follows:

1. A machine is elected ruler. In other words, the voters do not reserve the power to instruct; and, what is the equivalent, they fail to reserve a veto power as to legislation and cannot directly propose legislation. The establishment of a direct vote for public questions will remedy this portion of the system. Oregon has made the change. The initiative and referendum exist.

2. Nominations for public office are made at delegate conventions instead of by direct vote. Oregon has established the direct nomination system, as also has Wisconsin and practically all the southern states.

3. The members of the National House of Representatives are elected from 386 districts in order that the few may rule. There is not a labor representative in Congress, nor is there a real representative of the farming interests, such as are the officers of the Granges and Farmer's unions. The remedy is a statute that shall change the size of the election districts. Such a law can readily be secured when initiative petitions can be filed. The bill should provide that in place of as many congressional districts in the state as there are members of the House to be elected, only two or three congressional districts should exist. For example, in Illinois the twenty-five congressional districts should be reduced to two or three and the number of members for each district increased proportionately, with one vote for each voter. Under such a system each voter would be represented in Congress.

The details of the system are as follows:

The Mechanism of Proportional Representation.

The congressional candidates of each party would be nominated by direct vote, the number of nominees being one or two greater than are likely to be elected. These names would be printed on the ticket in the order in which they were nominated, the one receiving the highest vote being placed at the top. On election day each voter would place his mark at the head of his party's column, and in counting the votes each candidate is declared elected as soon as he receives the required quota, namely, if 200,000 votes are cast in a district where ten congressmen are to be elected, each candidate is declared elected whenever he receives 20,000 votes. If a labor party should cast 80,000 votes in such a district it would elect the four candidates first mentioned on its ticket. The farmers of they should cast 60,000 votes would elect three congressmen; and the other industrial classes would elect the remaining three. In short, each 20,000 votes in the district would elect their representative, except as fractions of 20,000 votes are cast by a group, in which case the fractional group casting the largest vote would elect a candidate.

Observations.

What each voter actually does with his vote is to indicate a first choice, second choice, third choice and fourth choice. This is indicated by the number of candidates in the congressional column. In counting the ballots the candidate at the head of the list is declared elected as soon as he receives the required 20,000 votes; and the second on the list is elected when he receives the required quota, and so on.

The system is proportional representation. Each voter is represented.

Results of Proportional Representation.

What is the full meaning of this? The establishment of direct nominations, with large election districts and the election of several representatives from a district, one vote to each voter, means that the minority

are ousted from power. Gerrymandering is terminated, as also is the excessive use of campaign funds. Capital, as a determining factor in campaigns, is dethroned. The voters become the sovereign power.

Situation in Oregon.

The situation in Oregon is positive proof that proportional representation must be installed before the elected representatives will really represent the voters. Oregon possesses the initiative and referendum system and a direct nomination law, and recently a legislature was elected, but there is no great change in the character of the men who are nominated and elected, for one-man election districts are still used. Practically the only candidates elected were those put up by the republican machine—an organization in which practically the only money contributed is from the monopoly and protective tariff interests. When the Oregon election districts are enlarged all will be changed, as the following analysis demonstrates:

Seven or more representatives for the state senate and lower house will be elected in a district and each voter will cast one vote. The result will be that the farmers organization in the state will see to it that as many farmer candidates are nominated as there are farmers' votes to elect them and the nominees will be the representative farmers in Oregon; whereas next winter these can only appear in the lobby of the state capitol in the name of the Grange. The same will be true as to wage-earners and the business men. In short, when seven or more candidates can be elected from a district there will be a decided change in the character of the men elected. The real leaders will be sent to the legislature and to congress. Representative government will be restored. Away back in early times in England when representative government was first established the city governments and the House of Commons represented the business interests of the several classes. This will again be the case when proportional representation is established. Representative government will again become a progressive force. The really great men of the country will

become the people's representatives.

Objectors to Proportional Representation.

We have seen that proportional representation results in representative government by the majority with representation by the various groups that compose the minority. The only real objectors to such a system of government are those who themselves are actually in the minority today but are ruling through machine politics, including gerrymandering. In Oregon, where the people can assert their rights through the initiative system they doubtless will soon wish to be represented in the legislature, city councils, and in congress. And throughout the country when the initiative system is established there will quickly be put to vote the question of establishing large election districts so that the real leaders in each industrial group shall represent their people in the National House of Representatives. Organized labor and organized farmers wish to be represented, and they can be represented when seven or more representatives are elected from a district and each voter has but one vote.

Details.

Proportional representation is no mere theory, for the system existed when representative government was first originated, as has been pointed out, and in recent years it has been established in Belgium and in five of the Swiss cantons and two of the Swiss cities, also in Japan. Some of the results, in addition to restoring majority rule under high-class leadership, are as follows:

It has banished gerrymandering, vote purchasing, intimidation at the polls, ballot-box stuffing, falsification of election returns, and all the other machine-rule methods.

It has mitigated sectional and racial differences.

Partisan bitterness is greatly lessened.

The need for fusion of diverse interests is terminated; as also is the undue power of the small groups in the one-man districts. They no longer hold a balance of power.

Furthermore, proportional representation tends to unify society, because it results in the repeal of spe-

cial privilege laws and each faction or class is represented.

Such being the case we should not express surprise that the Japanese should have adopted the system. Their statesmen are selecting from the white man's civilization its best and latest developments, including proportional representation. In this they are in advance of every one of the great European and American powers. May the United States be the next great state to establish a really representative system of government!

No change in the constitution is required. Section 3 of the Act of Jan. 16, 1901, will have to be altered. That is all. The existing law for one-man election districts is published at page 213 of Vol. 11, U. S. Statutes, Edward Thompson Co., edition.

For further details, consult "Representation of Interests," by Prof. John R. Commons, in the New York Independent, June, 1900; and articles by Robert Tyson, Esq., in the Arena, autumn of 1903 and February and September, 1904.

GEORGE H. SHIBLEY.

Washington, D. C.

THE "COMMON" MAN.

By the Rev. Charles Stelzle.

A prominent Eastern socialist is actively advocating a "Home Colony," from which the "ignorant," the "vulgar," and the "snobbish" are to be excluded. He would have no place for them in his model social community. I wonder where some of us common people come in on such a scheme for human society? To be sure, any company of men have a perfect right to form an exclusive colony, so that they may be rid of the men and women and children who are poor and ignorant, unlovely and unfortunate, but the fact remains that the great majority of us are just these things, and we simply must be reckoned with.

If the unusually gifted are to withdraw from our society, daintily touching us with kid gloved hands, then it is going to fare ill with us, for we need all the inspiration and the help that we can get from our fellowmen. I was going to say, but perhaps they would object to being called that.

But, seriously, we cannot get away

from the fact that any movement, to really succeed, must take into account all the sin and the meanness that lie deep in the hearts of men, for most of us are mean and selfish.

Furthermore, such a plan as is being advocated, was tried by some of the choicest spirits that could be gotten together, and it failed miserably. It failed because there was too much human nature about the men and women who constituted that famous colony.

Others have attempted to form exclusive colonies, and exclusive religions, too, but never have they succeeded.

Somewhat, it must be a good thing to be compelled to mingle with even the ignorant and the vulgar. For never yet has failed that exclusiveness bred selfishness and contempt for the masses of the people, of whom God made so many. Jesus Christ, in praying for his disciples, said: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world." The world needs the best that God has given men.

The real test of a social system or of a religious system is its ability to take the very worst man and make him a good man.

The Apostle Paul once declared himself to be the "chief of sinners," and that means everything that is snobbish and mean besides a great many other things. But he also said that he had been redeemed from these things by the power which came alone through the gospel which he preached.

There are millions of others who have passed through the same experience.

The "common" man—he is the fellow who must be met on his own ground, and no real progress can be made unless we take him with us.

Somebody's Blunder.

When Mr. Gompers and the other labor leaders presented the bill of grievances against the republican party to President Roosevelt, the latter asserted with considerable heat that the eight-hour law had been rigidly enforced. It is somewhat disconcerting to now be informed by Mr. Roosevelt that from this day on the law is to be enforced. Somebody has blundered but of course it can't be the president.—McMinville Telephone Register.

LABOR DAY

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Monday, September 3, 1906

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