

# Proportional Representation

By ROBERT TYSON, Secretary, Proportional Representation League, Toronto

ARTICLE 5.

## The Best Municipal Government

In my four former articles I have dealt with the necessity of obtaining real popular representation in order to get good government and clean politics. The present article shows the application of the same principle to municipal affairs.

First, an example of how not to do it, taking the city of Toronto as an example, because I live here. Our city's elections are these:

1. A mayor, elected from the city at large.

2. Four controllers, elected by the "block vote" from the city at large. These, with the mayor form what is known as the "Board of Control." Their salaries are large enough to justify them in giving practically their whole time to the service of the city. They meet sometimes as part of the city council, and more frequently by themselves as a board of five. Subject to a veto of the council, they have large powers.

3. Twenty aldermen, elected from seven wards by the "block vote"; one ward electing two and the other six wards electing three aldermen each.

These twenty-five men are the city council. Besides this, Toronto elects her School Board. The general plan is typical of municipal election methods throughout Canada.

### Common Plan Objectionable

Here are the objections:—

1. Public attention is largely concentrated on the mayoralty election, and thereby drawn away from the no less important elections of the other members of the city council. Also, when there are three or more mayoralty candidates, the mayor may be elected by a mere minority, instead of by a clear majority of those who vote.

2. The four controllers are elected by the "block vote"; that is, every elector may vote for four candidates. What this really means is that each voter has to split up his vote into four fractions. If he particularly wants one man on the board, and does not care about the other candidates, all he can do is to give that man one-fourth of his full vote. Similarly, if there are only two candidates he is interested in, or only three, our voter can only poll half or three-quarters of his vote, as the case may be.

"Plumping!" say you. So it is. And plumping is a natural and wholesome electoral instinct. Proportional Representation is "all plumping," on a plan which enables the full vote to count for one candidate instead of only a fraction of it.

### Block Vote Absurd

See the absurdity of the block vote. Here you have a large body, the electorate, electing a small body, the four controllers; and yet you propose that each single unit of the larger body should be represented by four units of the smaller body. Surely, if one unit of the larger body is represented by one unit in the smaller he gets all he should have.

Also, see the gross unfairness of the block vote. A bare majority of the voters can put in all the members, leaving the other voters without any representation. Worse still, if three "tickets" were in the field a minority of the voters could elect every member, leaving

a majority of the voters without any representation!

No such results are possible under Proportional Representation.

3. The Toronto Aldermen also are elected by the "block vote," with the objectionable ward system added. Then these three distinct powers—mayor, board of control and aldermen—entail a certain amount of divided responsibility.

### Johannesburg's Better System

Now let us look at some actual examples of a better method.

The city of Johannesburg, South Africa, is governed by a city council of ten members, all elected "at large" elected by Proportional voting on the Hare plan. The council elects its own chairman, and he is the mayor. No wards. No block vote. No divided responsibility. There may be twenty candidates at an election, and each elector may not know the record of all of them; but he is sure to know the good record of one candidate. That is all he needs to know in order to vote intelligently. But he will usually know more than this; and he can mark second and third and further "choices" according to his knowledge and preference.

Johannesburg adopted Proportional Representation in the autumn of 1909, and she has held two elections since; that is, in the autumns of 1910 and 1911 respectively. All three elections have demonstrated how the Propor-

tion of a small council to which full power is given. The average number of commissioners or councillors is five, each being the head of a department; and the mayor is simply one of them. Far better government is obtained by this plan than under the old way of electing a great string of officials under the mistaken idea that that was real democracy. By the way, at least one Canadian city has adopted "commission government," to wit, St. John, New Brunswick.

Proportional Representation is not a part of the method of commission government in the United States; therefore there must be something to prevent the commissioners becoming a practical oligarchy; and for this purpose the Initiative, Referendum and Recall are usually added.

### An Annual "Recall"

This province of Ontario does not need the Recall, because her annual elections have the effect of "recalling" the whole council yearly. The same remark applies to other Canadian provinces. I have been a municipal voter in Toronto for more than a quarter of a century; I always vote; and I am strongly in favor of our plan of annual elections. They are far better than long terms with the elaborate machinery of the Recall.

Johannesburg and Pretoria do not need the Initiative and Referendum nor the Recall, because they have P. R.

the tendency is still stronger where Proportional Representation is used.

### Proportional Representation Bodies

It may be useful to inform you about two old-established organizations which are working to promote the adoption of effective voting, as the Australians call it. There is the Proportional Representation Society, with headquarters at 179 St. Stephen's House, Westminster Bridge, London, England; Hon. Secretary, Mr. John H. Humphreys; and there is the American Proportion Representation League, of which I am the secretary; address: 20 Harbord Street, Toronto, Canada. This league was founded in the United States, and for some years its secretary was Mr. Stoughton Cooley, of Chicago. Most of the members are residents of the United States, but circumstances have now placed the secretaryship in the hands of the old Canadian who has had the privilege of addressing the readers of *The Grain Growers' Guide* in this series of articles.

### THE GUARANTORS OF PEACE

Many of the brightest and soberest European minds are convinced that an appalling crime is in preparation. In a recent issue the *London Statist* subscribes to a "universal belief at home and abroad that war between this country and Germany is inevitable." The steady, long-continued decline in German and British bonds, the late speech by the First Lord of the Admiralty on the Supplementary Naval Appropriation Bill, and many other circumstances, are pointed to by some people as indicating a drift toward war.

Germany's national destiny demands territorial expansion, it is said, and Britain blocks the way; hence there must be war. Young Germans by the tens of thousands must be sent to slaughter in order that young Germans may have more land to settle on under the flag of the Fatherland, though they can now settle on the same land under another flag if they wish; and no agriculturalist claims that soil is made more fertile by hoisting hunting of another color over it. Germany must be half ruined by colossal war expenditures to promote German trade.

There is only one genuine motive for war between England and Germany—namely, an itch to fight. Behind all the modern statesmanly phrases about national destiny stands the medieval spirit that delighted in killing—the identical spirit that devastated Holland, depopulated the Palatinate, decreed Sicilian Vespers and Saint Bartholomews.

With a government of a Frederick in one country and of a George the Third in the other there would have been war before this; but we think there will be no war, because the people who must do the fighting are now strongly represented in both governments. The Socialists in the Reichstag and their equivalent in Parliament are the best guarantors of peace.—Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

Johannesburg, the commercial metropolis of South Africa, has entrusted its city government to the leadership of a woman, Mrs. A. M. Ellis, who bears the title of "mayoress." Mayoress Ellis is planning a competitive international exhibition of handiwork in October, in which all classes of the population, including the colored natives, will join.



PREMIER ASQUITH ON HIS MEMORABLE VISIT TO DUBLIN

Sitting (left to right): Lady Verney, Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, Mrs. Asquith, Mr. Augustine Birrell (Chief Secretary for Ireland). Standing: Mr. C. Asquith, the Master of Elibank, Miss Asquith and Mr. A. Asquith.

tional plan arouses civic spirit and gives real representation.

Pretoria, in South Africa, is governed precisely on the Johannesburg plan, except that the council is smaller because the city is not so large as Johannesburg.

In England and in Germany the mayor is not elected by popular vote. The council elects him. In some German cities he is the city general manager, advertised for and paid a large salary after the council have appointed him.

### Growth of Commission Rule

The United States can also give us some good examples. Nearly two hundred cities and towns south of the line have adopted what is called "commission government." It is really the elec-

tions and councillors who really represent the people. But until Canadian and U. S. cities get Proportional Representation, municipal reformers do well to fight strenuously for the Initiative and Referendum—their point of least resistance.

In order to get "continuity of policy," the "hold over" method is sometimes advocated and used; that is, electing part of your council at one election and part at the next. This is an insidious way of crippling the people's power. They ought to have in reserve the power of turning out the whole council, lock, stock and barrel, if it does not do right. And in practice the "hold over" plan is needless, because the voters will re-elect a good man again and again. That is a well-known fact under Canadian municipal methods; and