

## REFORM.

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among men for the purpose of performing those things which from their very nature cannot be performed by the individual, involving as it does the taking of the wealth of the individual for the use of the community, it naturally follows that the right to vote follows the postulate that all men are entitled to life. Not only are they entitled to vote but to vote in such a manner as will give effect to that vote. Hence, not only should every act of the government be that of the representatives of the people but of the representatives of a majority of the people. As in a natural state of society where all the members of the community can meet in common the majority will determine the action of the body, so should the action of the representatives of the larger body, which is the result of a sort of political boiling down process, be the will of the majority of the whole people of the community.

The system which is destined to prove a solution of this problem seems to be some form of elections by quotas. Whether it shall be by the single transferable vote, as advocated by Thomas Hare, by the multi-vote list of Switzerland, the cumulative vote list, or some other form, it seems that all new systems must be based upon the quota principle. The form which is herewith presented for your consideration is a modification of the list quota system, having as merits the two points that it is certain and definite, whereas the Hare system is not, and that it is simple and easily understood by those who are unaccustomed to the study of these matters, while the Swiss system is complicated and apt to confuse the average voter.

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In presenting a plan of action which must meet the approval of the mass of the people and which must be operated by the mass of the people, it is necessary that it shall be of such a nature as will first meet their approval, and, having been adopted, will be within their capabilities and understanding. Not only must a just principle be set forth, but it must be in such form as will be within the comprehension of those to whom it is addressed. And not only must it be within the comprehension of the ordinary voters but it must be of such a nature that designing politicians who profit by the present system cannot torture from it objections which will prejudice the minds of the people.

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Take as an example the objection which has so long been urged against the Hare system, that it is uncertain. That if a quota of 1000 be necessary to a choice and 1000 electors mark A first choice and B second choice, while another 1000 electors mark A first choice and C second choice it will be a matter of chance whether B or C or either of them is elected.

For, if in counting the ballots the 1000 necessary for the election of A should contain B as second choice, then the surplus votes of A, which under the rules of the system go to the second choice would be counted for C, though B had just as many votes as C. Now, while it may be said that this accident may not happen more than once in a hundred elections, it may happen in all of a hundred elections; the mere fact that it may happen at all is of sufficient importance to make its friends pause in their advocacy. That it might cause grave complications at some time is possible if not probable; that every political beneficiary of the present system would greedily seize upon and exploit it for all it was worth cannot be doubted. It is really an objection; it can easily be magnified into the greatest of objections.

On the other hand the Swiss, and other multi-vote systems are complex enough to cause the uninitiated voter to hesitate, and to enable the designing politician to confound him in the mazes of complicated detail which are bewildering to any but students. The Swiss system is preferable to the Hare system because there can never be any uncertainty as to the result of the counting. It is a question for the statesmen of each country to decide for themselves whether it is so complicated as to confuse the electorate. It has been the experience of the writer that this is an objection urged by the voters to whom it is presented, and with that objection in mind the Swiss system has been modified to the form presented herewith.

The province has been made the unit of representation where possible, for the reason that it is a natural political division with which the people are familiar. It is desirable that the unit of representation under any form of proportional representation shall be large enough to admit of representation to all reasonable minorities, and at the same time not so large that citizens cannot acquaint themselves with the affairs of the whole district. A district of from ten to twenty-five members is preferable, and for that reason the provinces of Ontario and Quebec have been divided.

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The third provision of the act provides for the nomination of all the candidates whose supporters have any reason to hope for success. The money forfeiture which has heretofore been required is unjust because it handicaps the poor people. The circulation of a petition for signatures is a work so light that any body of citizens can easily do it. Indeed in some of the states of the United States where any body is allowed to present names no confusion has resulted.