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Hare System of Proportional Representation

AN ILLUSTRATIVE ELECTION

This leaflet illustrates how a representative body, for example a City Council, might be elected by the Hare system either at large or from districts electing several members each. It is supposed that five members are to be elected and that nine candidates have been nominated.

Note.—In many cases it would be advisable to elect together a larger number of members than five. The numbers used in this leaflet are kept small for the sake of simplicity.

THE BALLOT

Directions to Voters :

Put the figure 1 opposite the name of your first choice. If you want to express also second, third, and other choices, do so by putting the figure 2 opposite the name of your second choice, the figure 3 opposite the name of your third choice, and so on. You may express thus as many choices as you please.

This ballot will not be counted for your second choice unless it is found that it cannot help your first; it will not be counted for your third choice unless it is found that it cannot help either your first or your second; etc. **The more choices you express, the surer you are to make your ballot count for one of the candidates you favor.**

A ballot is spoiled if the figure 1 is put opposite more than one name. If you spoil this ballot, tear it across once, return it to the election officer in charge of the ballots, and get another from him.

FOR THE COUNCIL

	ALLAN L. BENSON
	WILLIAM E. BORAH
	LOUIS D. BRANDEIS
	WILLIAM J. BRYAN
	EUGENE V. DEBS
	SAMUEL GOMPERS
	THEODORE ROOSEVELT
	ELIHU ROOT
	WOODROW WILSON

RESULT OF ELECTION

No. of Votes—116

No. of Seats—5

Quota (Smallest number of votes that five, but not six, candidates can get)=20

	1st Count	2d Count		3d Count		4th Count		Final Count		Elected Candidates with Order of Seniority
		Transfer of WILSON'S Surplus	Result	Transfer of BORAH'S Votes	Result	Transfer of GOMPERS' Votes	Result	Transfer of DEBS'S Votes	Result	
BENSON	8		8		8		8	+7	15	
BORAH	4		4	—4						
BRANDEIS	12	+3	15		15	+5	20		20	Brandeis (5)
BRYAN	17	+3	20		20		20		20	Bryan (2)
DEBS	7		7		7		7	—7		
GOMPERS	2	+4	6		6	—6				
ROOSEVELT	19		19	+1	20		20		20	Roosevelt (3)
ROOT	17		17	+3	20		20		20	Root (4)
WILSON	30	—10	20		20		20		20	Wilson (1)
Non-transferable ballots						+1	1		1	
Totals	116		116		116		116		116	

EXPLANATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

First Count. The first column of figures in the table shows the total number of first-choice votes for each candidate, that is, the total number of ballots on which his name was marked with the figure 1. In most States the first choices would be counted at the several precincts. All operations subsequent to the count of first choices are performed by the general electoral board of the entire district, the ballots being brought together to one place for their examination.

Ascertainment of Quota. As soon as the total number of valid ballots, in this case 116, is known, the general electoral board

ascertains the *quota*, that is, the *smallest number of votes which for a certainty will secure the election of a candidate*. This number of votes, the smallest that five, but not six, candidates can get when 116 votes are cast, is found by dividing 116 by 6 and taking the next whole number larger than the quotient. The division of 116 by 6 yields $19\frac{2}{3}$. It is clear, therefore, that although six candidates might get as many as 19 votes each, it would be impossible for more than five to get as many as 20 each. The number sufficient for election, the *quota*, therefore, is 20.

Election of Wilson.

As Wilson has received more than the quota of votes, he is at once declared elected.

**Transfer of
Wilson's Surplus.**

Election of Bryan.

As the 10 ballots received by Wilson in excess of the quota would be wasted if allowed to remain with him, they are transferred to other candidates, *each of them in accordance with the next choice expressed on it.* Three of them go to Brandeis, giving him 15 in all; three of them to Bryan, giving him the quota of 20 and electing him; and four of them to Gompers, bringing his total up to 6.

**Third Count.
Transfer of
Borah's Votes.
Election of
Roosevelt and
Root.**

It now becomes necessary for the electoral board to declare defeated the candidate now at the bottom of the poll, in this case Borah, and to transfer his ballots. If these ballots were allowed to remain with Borah, they would be wasted: they should therefore be transferred to other candidates. One of Borah's four ballots is transferred to Roosevelt because he is marked on it as second choice; two of them are transferred to Root for a similar reason; and the fourth one, on which the third choice is for Root, is transferred to him because Roosevelt, marked on it as second choice, has already received the full quota. Under the Hare System no candidate retains more votes than are needed for his election.

**Fourth Count.
Transfer of
Gompers' Votes.
Election of
Brandeis.**

The ballots of Gompers, who is now at the bottom of the poll, must next be transferred. Five of them go to Brandeis, completing his quota. The sixth, not being marked for any candidate not already elected or defeated, is entered on the table as a "non-transferable ballot." All five of the seats have now been filled.

**Final Count.
Transfer of
Debs's Votes.**

Though the election is now at an end, we may, if we wish, carry the count to its theoretical conclusion by declaring Debs defeated and transferring his ballots. They go, naturally, to Benson, and show the total strength of the Socialist group to be insufficient to give the party a right to one of the five seats.

GENERAL RESULTS

Within the limits of practicability, every voter has helped to elect the person whom, under the actual circumstances, he preferred to help elect. Each party or group of voters has obtained representation in proportion to its strength; it has also—without any troublesome and expensive primaries—secured as representatives the particular candidates it preferred.

Each of the five members is elected by about a fifth of the voters of the community, just as would be the case if the community had been divided into five districts or wards for the election of one member each. But there is a significant difference between the fifth of the voters in the one case and that in the other: under the district system it is a fifth who live together but think differently; under the system here explained it is a fifth who live a little farther apart but think alike. So many voters who sleep in adjoining houses, or so many voters who agree—which is the more reasonable kind of constituency for a member of a policy-determining, tax-spending body?

DEFECTS OF THE OLD DISTRICT SYSTEM

1. Excludes from representation great numbers of voters.
2. Invites corruption in close districts by making extremely valuable the few votes that suffice to turn the scale.
3. Discourages interest in voting on the part of all who find themselves unable to mark their ballot for a candidate they really want without throwing it away.
4. Makes the *manner of distribution* of a party's votes among the districts as important as their *number*. Hence "gerrymandering."—Permits minority rule.
5. Is largely responsible for the "pork barrel," for it makes each representative dependent for re-election on a constituency of voters who are united on nothing except the interests of their *locality*.

ADVANTAGES OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (Hare System)

1. Gives real representation to practically every voter.
2. Makes votes of equal value, discouraging corruption.
3. Stimulates interest in voting by giving the voter the opportunity of marking candidates he really wants without running the risk of throwing his vote away.

4. Insures a majority of the representatives to a majority of the voters, true representation to all substantial minorities, and leadership to the real leaders.

5. Eliminates the chief incentive to "pork barrel" legislation.

6. Encourages representatives to have principles and to be true to them.

7. Tends to secure the cooperation and loyalty of the entire community.

8. Makes the deliberative body so truly representative that it can be made responsible, without danger, for the appointment of important administrative officials.

NOTE ON THE TRANSFER OF SURPLUS VOTES.

The transfer of surplus votes (see "Second Count" of table) can be made in either of two ways. One is to take for transfer 10 of Wilson's actual ballots at random, being careful, however, to take an equal number, as nearly as possible, from the Wilson ballots cast in each election precinct. The other is to sort out *all* Wilson's transferable ballots into piles according to next choices, and then to transfer the right proportionate number from each pile. For example, if 9 of Wilson's 30 ballots show Gompers as next choice, it is evident that ten-thirtieths of the nine, or 3, should be actually transferred to Gompers, and that twenty-thirtieths of them, or 6, should be kept for Wilson as part of his quota.

The first of these methods is the one in use in Ashtabula, Ohio. The second is the one ordinarily used in British dominions.

A full explanation and analysis of both methods will be found in the Supplement to the **Proportional Representation Review** for July, 1917. The element of chance involved in the first method is found, on analysis, to be infinitesimally small—too small, in large popular elections, to be objectionable from a practical point of view. If, however, perfection in the transfer of surplus ballots is desired, and a little extra trouble in the counting is not objected to, the second method can be used.

American Proportional Representation League

President—William Dudley Foulke

Vice-Presidents—John R. Commons

William S. U'Ren

Alice Thacher Post

General Secretary-Treasurer—C. G. Hoag, 802 Franklin Bank Building, Philadelphia.

Secretary for Canada—H. S. Ross, K. C., 20 St. Nicholas Street, Montreal.

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