



UNCORRECTED PROOF.

FABIAN TRAGTS, No. 14.

The New Reform Bill.

PUBLISHED BY

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Suffrage - U.K.

Electors - U.K.



INTRODUCTION.

SINCE the time of the Chartist agitation, no attempt has been made to formulate a thorough scheme for the reform of the laws regulating our electoral system, if the confused, inconsistent, and often unintelligible mass of Acts of Parliament on the Statute Book can be dignified by such a name. From the Statute of Edward I., establishing freedom of election, down to the County Electors' Act (1888), there have been between one hundred and fifty and one hundred and sixty Acts to regulate the Franchise, Registration of Electors, and Procedure at Elections, etc.; of which, no less than one hundred and sixteen have been enacted since the passing of the Reform Act of 1832—a measure intended by Lord John Russell to finally settle the question of Reform.

With the single exception of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act (1883), no attempt has been made to codify even a single section of Electoral Law. The continual presence of a large number of lawyers in the House of Commons has only helped to make the muddle greater. One Act of Parliament is made to nullify another, and a superstitious reverence for antiquated modes of draughtmanship has only made confusion worse confounded. A vote is given by one Act to every male householder, and taken away from him by the cumbrous and iniquitous system of registration in force, with its arbitrary term of qualification—not from one of the usual Quarter-days, but from the 15th July—and its intentionally complex arrangements of claim, objection, and revision.

It is often said that the chief points of the People's Charter have been embodied in English law; but, as a matter of fact, the Ballot alone has been adopted in its simple entirety. The Suffrage has been considerably lowered, and some approach has been made to the establishment of Equal Electoral Districts, but nothing whatever has been done with regard to the Payment of Members and the Duration of Parliament. The abolition of a Property Qualification for Members has been merely a nominal reform, and can only be rendered effective by Payment of Members, and of their election expenses.

The proposals of the present Reform Bill are eminently moderate, and are little more than the formulation of the popular demands, hitherto responded to by so-called advanced politicians with the vaguest promises and most ambiguous resolutions. In these days, when both the great political parties are assuming the name of "Democrats," it is not merely desirable, but absolutely necessary, to have some sort of a test by which to try the sincerity of a candidate's attachment to Democratic principles. This Bill is such a test, and all Democratic Candidates who refuse to endorse it should be relegated to everlasting political perdition.

To make a complete Electoral Code, provision should be made for the establishment of Equal Electoral Districts, automatically re-adjusted according to population, after every census; the amalgamation of the eighty-five statutes dealing with the Disqualification of Candidates, and of the thirty-one dealing with the procedure at an election; the further simplification of the law relating to Corrupt and Illegal Practices; and the Abolition of the House of Lords.

Until the electorate consists of the whole adult population, and perfect freedom of choice of Members, combined with the fullest control over their legislative action, has been secured through payment of Members and their election expenses, and the second ballot, the people will be hopelessly handicapped in the promotion and enactment of those measures of social reform, which will ultimately result in the socialization of industry and the establishment of the Commonwealth on a co-operative basis, for which end alone political reform is of any value.

THE NEW REFORM BILL.

PRELIMINARY.

1. This Act shall come into operation on the First Day, January, 1892.

DEFINITIONS.

2. In this act the term "*Public meeting*" means—Any meeting open, without ticket, to all electors in the constituency in which the meeting is held.

"*Period of election*" means—From the date of the issue of the writ by the clerk of the Crown or the speaker to the date of the declaration of the poll.

The returning officer shall include deputy returning officer.

"*Public funds*"—Shall include state and local funds.

"*Person*" shall mean every man and woman of the age of twenty-one years or more.

PART I.

Qualification of Electors.

3. Every person over twenty-one years of age, who has continuously resided in or occupied the same premises for the space of four weeks next previous to any registration period, shall, with the exceptions hereinafter provided, be entitled to be registered as an elector, and when and so long as so registered, to vote at all elections taking place in the constituency in which the said premises are situated.

Provided that residence as a patient in any public hospital, lunatic asylum, infirmary, or convalescent home, or as a pauper in any workhouse or poor law institution, or as a soldier or officer in any barracks or other building belonging to the war department or the admiralty, or as a person legally under detention in any prison or other lawful place of detention, shall not be deemed to be residence qualifying for registration as an elector.

Provided also that none of the persons hereinafter mentioned shall be entitled to be registered as electors, namely:—

Her Majesty the Queen (?).

Peers of parliament (?).

Aliens.

Persons who have been declared by legal process to be of unsound mind.

Persons actually undergoing a sentence of imprisonment, or penal servitude.

Persons scheduled for corrupt or illegal practices, &c.

4. No person shall be registered as an elector who has not satisfied the conditions as to residence herein specified; but it shall be presumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that every adult person satisfying the condition as to residence, is qualified to be registered as an elector.

5. No person shall be disqualified from being registered as an elector, merely by reason of being a woman, or a woman under coverture, or a person in receipt of parochial relief, or a member of Her Majesty's military or naval forces; nor on the ground that any rates due in respect of the premises in which he resides are unpaid.

The existing qualifications of Parliamentary electors, which are contained in thirty-eight statutes, are seven in number, four being peculiar to counties, and three common to both counties and boroughs:—

Counties.

1. A freehold estate of 40s. or upwards.
2. A copyhold estate of £5 annual value.
3. A leasehold for either twenty years of £50, or sixty years of £5 annual value.
4. An occupation of lands or tenements at a rental of £50 or upwards.

Counties and Boroughs.

1. The occupation of land or premises of the clear annual value of £10.
2. The occupation of a dwelling-house.
3. The occupation of lodgings of an annual value, if let unfurnished, of £10.

There are also 32,000 liverymen and freemen in boroughs who are electors under qualifications that will die out.

This section sweeps away all existing franchises; makes residence—not occupation—the qualification; effectually prevents the creation of faggot votes, and makes plural voting practically impossible. Of the six millions who are registered, over a quarter of a million possess duplicate votes, some men having fifteen or even twenty. The addition to the number of voters would be between 2½ and 3 million adult men—to say nothing of the eleven million adult women. There are 121,287 absentee voters on the English and Welsh county registers alone. The new franchise should apply to all elections, whether for parliament or any local or municipal body, and would thus confer full civic privileges upon every elector without regard to sex. Manhood, or what is called Universal Suffrage, prevails in France, Germany, United States, New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand.

The State of Wyoming alone enjoys absolute Universal Suffrage.

PART II.

Registration of Electors.

6. The county council in every county shall appoint annually a county registration officer, who shall also be the returning officer at all parliamentary elections, under 38 & 39 Vict., c. 84, for all the constituencies in such county.

7. Where a parish has a population according to the census for the time being in force exceeding 500 in number, and (with the exception of the overseers) there is no vestry clerk or other officer whose duty it is to make out the lists of voters therein, the vestry shall appoint annually a local registration officer, whose duty it shall be to give the notices under the registration acts, and to prepare the lists of voters, claims, and objections for such parish, and do all other acts hereinafter provided for in respect of registration.

8. The overseers of a parish for which a local registration officer has not been appointed, may employ such persons as may be necessary for the purpose of serving notices, collecting returns, making enquiries, and otherwise aiding them in performing the duties hereinafter provided for in respect of registration.

9. On or before the 20th day of December, March, June, and September in every year, the person who is *rated for each tenement* shall furnish the local registration officer in every parish with a list of the adult men and women who have resided in the tenement for the period of four weeks next preceding, provided that any person who shall be proved to the satisfaction of the county registration officer to have refused or negligently omitted to make the return, or to have wilfully or negligently made a false or inaccurate return, shall be liable upon summary conviction thereof, to a fine not exceeding £5 for the first offence, and £10 for the second offence.

10. The local registration officer in every parish shall, on or before the last day in December in every year, make out a list of persons qualified to be electors, alphabetically arranged, and in the same order in which their places of residences appear in the rate book for the parish in which the premises are situate.

11. The local registration officer in every parish shall, on or before the last day in March, June, and September in every year, make out a supplementary list containing the names arranged as hereinbefore provided.

1. All persons who should be struck off the register, specifying the reasons therefore.
2. All new names to be inserted.
3. New claimants.
4. Persons objected to.
5. Persons claiming in respect of successive residence.

12. These lists shall be printed and published by being affixed on or before the 1st day of January, April, July, and October, in every year, to the door or notice board of all churches, chapels, and places of worship, town halls, local board offices, and other municipal and parochial offices, post offices, telegraph offices, assize and county courts, public baths, wash-houses, libraries, museums, police stations, and all offices occupied for public purposes.

13. Any eligible elector who has not been included in the list may, on or before the 10th day of January, April, July, and October in every year, claim to have his name inserted.

Any person who has not resided in the same parish for the four weeks next preceding the 10th day of January, April, July, and October, may claim to have his name inserted in respect of successive residence in the same or any other constituency. Full particulars as to each place of residence must be inserted in the claim.

The local registration officer shall provide all forms of claim free of charge.

14. Any elector may on or before the 10th day of January, April, July, and October in any year, object to any persons upon the register for the constituency in which such parish is situate, and in which he is an elector, on the ground, that he—

1. Is dead.
2. Has not complied with the terms of residence.
3. Is a peer of parliament.
4. Is an alien.
5. Is a person scheduled for corrupt or illegal practices, &c. ; or
6. Is a person who has been declared by legal process to be of unsound mind.

A copy of the objection shall be forwarded by post by the person objecting to every person objected to.

15. The local registration officer shall, in every quarter, obtain from the registrars of births and deaths in the district for which he is registration officer, a certified return showing the names in full of all adult persons who shall have died during the quarter, and the dates of their deaths ; such return to be made up to the 10th day of January, April, July, and October in every year, and to be delivered to the local registration officer not later than the 15th day of January, April, July, and October in every year.

16. On or before the 20th day of January in every year the local registration officer in every parish shall forward printed lists of voters, new claimants, and objections, together with the replies received from persons objected to, and his own observations on the new claims and the objections, to his county registration officer.

All forms of claim, copies of the objections, and any correspondence relating to them, and the return of deaths shall be attached to the lists.

17. On or before the 20th day of April, July, and October in every year, the local registration officer in every parish shall forward to his county registration officer supplementary lists containing the names arranged as hereinbefore provided for—

1. All persons who should be struck off the register, specifying the reasons.
2. All new names to be inserted.
3. Persons objected to.
4. Persons claiming in respect of successive residence.
5. Persons scheduled for corrupt or illegal practices.

All forms of claim, copies of the objections, and any correspondence relating to them, and the return of deaths, shall be attached to the lists.

18. On the receipt by the county registration officer of the lists and supplementary lists forwarded to him in accordance with the preceding sections of the act, he shall examine them, and, if he shall see due cause, shall give notice in writing by post to all persons whom he proposes to strike off the register, or who have been objected to, that, unless reason to the contrary be shown within seven days, their names will be struck off the register.

If no objection be raised to the new claimants, the county registration officer shall insert the names on the register forthwith. In cases of claims in respect of successive residence, the county registration officer shall, if he think necessary, require a report from the local registration officers, verifying the claims or otherwise. Whenever it shall seem to the county registration officer necessary to hold a local enquiry in any parish, he shall give seven days' notice by advertisement in one or more local newspapers of the place, date, and time of such enquiry.

The register of voters shall be made up by the county registration officer, who shall classify it according to wards and parishes for all local elections, and shall come into force not later than the 1st day of March, June, September, and January in every year.

The county registration officer shall provide his local registration officers with all forms of claim and objection.

19. If any person making a claim or lodging an objection be dissatisfied with the decision of the county registration officer with regard to such claim or objection, he may within twenty-one days call upon the county registration officer to state a case for submission to the judge of the nearest county court.

20. If any local registration officer be reported to the local government board by his county registration officer for repeated and persistent misconduct, or neglect in carrying out the provisions of this Act, the local government board shall order an official enquiry to be held, and if the charges of misconduct or neglect shall be substantiated to the satisfaction of the local government board,

the local registration officer shall be dismissed, and the vestry shall be forthwith convened for the appointment of another officer.

21. All expenses in connection with the registration of voters shall be defrayed out of the county fund.

22. If any person who shall be on the register for more than one constituency shall vote more than once at a general election, he shall be liable on summary conviction thereof to a fine not exceeding £5.

The present arrangements for registering the crowded dwellers in populous cities are virtually those which sufficed when the Statute of Henry VI. for the first time restricted the county franchise to 40s. freeholders. The electoral registration of London's five million souls is left to no better organization than that of a rural hamlet of the last century.

At present only one in nine of London's population is on the register, as compared with one in six of the United Kingdom outside London, and one in five in many provincial boroughs. The term of occupation is absurdly long, and so arbitrarily dated, that every removal in London practically involves eighteen months' or two years' disfranchisement.

This section supersedes the cumbrous mass of legal technicalities contained in thirteen acts of parliament, and makes the work of registration as simple, economical, and nearly automatic as possible. The existing system of revision of the voters' lists is abolished, and a saving effected in the item of revising barristers' salaries in England of £25,000 a year. The work of preparing the register is put upon local officials, subject to local control, and their efficiency will largely depend upon the public spirit of the inhabitants of the district for which they act; and there will be only one register for all elections.

The term of qualification in other counties is almost everywhere excessive. In Natal—for English people—three years' residence is the qualifying term; for natives, twelve years. In New Zealand, one year's residence in the colony and six months' in the constituency are required before Registration. In France and Queensland, six months; and in Japan, twelve months' residence in the constituency qualifies. In the Netherlands, eighteen months' residence at home, or in the colonies, is sufficient.

PART III.

Election Expenses.

23. The returning officer at an election shall be entitled to his reasonable charges not exceeding the sums mentioned in the schedule to this act in respect of services and expenses of the several kinds mentioned in the said schedule, which have been properly rendered or incurred by him for the purposes of the election. The amount of such charges shall be paid out of the county fund.

The returning officer shall not be entitled to payment for any other services or expenses or at any greater rates than as in the said schedule mentioned, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding. The returning officer shall not be entitled to any charges which are not duly included in his account rendered to the county treasurer, together with all receipts and other vouchers proving the expenditure, within twenty-one days after the day on which the return is made of the person or persons elected at the election.

24. The returning officer shall require the sum of £10 to be deposited at the time of nomination by, or on behalf of, every candidate at a parliamentary election, and should any candidate poll less than one-tenth of the total votes polled or 500 votes, whichever shall be the lesser, his deposit shall be forfeited and paid over to the county treasurer, and in any other case the deposit shall be refunded after the declaration of the poll; provided that no candidate shall be nominated until the deposit shall have been paid.

The necessity of making parliamentary candidates give security is obvious. Individuals are not wanted to thrust themselves upon the constituencies, but should be the nominees of some organized body of electors, to whom the provision of the small amount of £10 would be easy. The penalty would operate as an obstacle to mere self-advertisement, but would not restrict the free choice of the electors.

In Greece, each candidate is required to give £8 security.

In Natal, £25, refunded if the candidate polls one-fifth of the votes polled.

25. The returning officer in every constituency shall, three days before the day of election, forward by post to every elector an official post card, showing the names of the candidates, the number of the elector on the register, and the place at which he is entitled to poll. The poll-cards shall be transmitted through the post office and delivered free of charge, subject only to the regulations of the post office relating to inland letters. If any poll-card or form of promise to vote be printed or issued by any candidate or his agent, his election shall be *ipso facto* void.

26. The returning officer in every constituency shall, within three days of the date of nomination, cause to be printed and posted

in all the usual places throughout the constituency an official placard showing the names of all the candidates, the date of the poll, and the polling places assigned to each district.

27. H.M. stationery office shall provide all ballot boxes, a separate stamping instrument for each constituency, and all forms, other than ballot papers, required for use at an election, and shall supply them, free of charge, within ten days of the receipt of the requisition of the returning officer for the constituency in which they are to be used; provided that all fittings and compartments provided for municipal or school board elections shall be used so far as is practicable for parliamentary elections; provided also that all ballot boxes provided for parliamentary elections shall be used so far as is practicable for municipal or school board elections.

28. The returning officer shall furnish, free of charge, all forms of nomination of candidates at a parliamentary election, and he shall supply, free of charge, the personation agents of each candidate with a copy of the register for the polling station at which they are personation agents.

29. Every duly nominated candidate shall, on the day of nomination, furnish the returning officer with a copy of his election address, which shall not exceed one thousand words. The returning officer shall cause the addresses to be printed, and shall hand them to the post office which shall transmit and deliver them free of charge to each registered elector, subject only to the ordinary regulations of the post office relating to inland letters; provided that the addresses of all the candidates shall be separately directed by the returning officer or his agents, and handed in for transmission on the same day.

30. Every duly nominated candidate may once during an election period hand to the returning officer one packet of literature for each elector, folded and addressed ready for transmission through the post, the whole not to exceed two ounces in weight, which shall be transmitted through the post office and delivered free of charge to each registered elector, subject only to the ordinary regulations of the post office relating to inland letters.

This is a novel provision. The only exemptions from postage at the present time, are petitions and addresses forwarded to the Queen, and petitions forwarded to members of parliament, or peers, for presentation in the House of Commons, or the House of Lords.

The official correspondence of government departments is franked by having the signature of a duly authorized official stamped on each letter or packet. This practice is now sought to be extended to returning officers for election purposes.

31. Any candidate at an election may use, free of charge, for the purpose of public meetings during the period of an election, any suitable room in a school receiving a grant out of moneys provided by parliament, after the ordinary school hours, and any suitable

room in any building, other than a church, the expense of maintaining which is wholly or partially payable out of any local rate; provided that one day's notice of the proposed public meeting be given to the committee or managers of such school or building; provided that the use of the school or building shall be granted in the order of the receipt of the application by or on behalf of the candidate; provided that no candidate shall have the use of the same hall or room on a second occasion should any other candidate desire to make use of it under the provisions of this clause; provided also that if it be proved that any meeting was not a public meeting within the meaning of this act, it shall be an illegal practice, and the person by whom and the candidate on whose behalf the meeting was convened shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding £100.

Under the Act regulating the Procedure at Parliamentary and Municipal Elections (35 and 36 Vict., c. 33), the returning officer may use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll at a parliamentary election, any room in a school receiving a grant out of moneys provided by parliament; and any room the expense of maintaining which is payable out of any local rate. The Allotment (Amendment) Act of 1890 provides for the free use of rooms in board schools for public meetings to discuss the question of the provision of allotments.

32. No conveyance shall be permitted to be used for the purpose of the conveyance of the electors to or from the poll, unless the owner of such conveyance shall himself accompany it; and any person who shall otherwise lend or employ for the purpose of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll any conveyance whatever, shall be guilty of an illegal practice, and shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding £100.

The returning officer in every constituency shall assign one or more polling places in every parish in such manner that every elector shall have his polling place within a distance not exceeding one mile from his residence. Each polling station shall be furnished with such number of compartments in which the voters can mark their votes screened from observation, as the returning officer thinks necessary, so that at least one compartment be provided for every 150 electors entitled to vote at such polling station.

The cost of a general election, even under the restricted scale of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act (1883), is still such a tax on the candidates as to re-establish the property qualification supposed to have been abolished in 1858.

In boroughs, the maximum expenditure allowed for one candidate is £350, where the number of electors does not exceed two thousand, and rises by £30 for every succeeding thousand, or part of a thousand electors. In counties, the maximum is £650 for two thousand electors, and £60 for each thousand or part of a thousand electors above that number. This scale does not include the returning officer's expenses, which, though limited by the Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875), amounted to £134,000 in 1880, and £140,000 in 1886. The total expenditure, according to the candidates' returns, at the general election of 1868 was £1,383,903; in 1880, £1,650,000; in 1885, £1,026,646; in 1886, £1,624,000, many elections being uncontested. The returning officer's expenses would be largely reduced by this part of the act so far as his old duties are concerned, and the extra expense involved by

his new duties would be minimised by having the printing, &c., done on a large scale. The schedule of charges at present allowed would be considerably modified, and the amount of personal expenditure by the candidate reduced.

By these provisions, everything practicable has been done to place the poorest candidate on an equality with the richest.

At present the expenses of elections for school boards, town councils, local boards, vestries, district boards and boards of guardians, as well as county councils, are paid out of local funds. The proposal to put the expenses of parliamentary elections on the county fund would equitably spread the cost over the whole body of ratepayers. The cost of registration is already paid locally.

In France, Austria, Hungary, and Italy, the payment is made entirely out of the state exchequer. In the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Japan, the burden is thrown on the local rates. In Belgium and Greece, the expense is divided—the ballot boxes, desks, and permanent fixtures being provided by the State in the first instance, and stored, renewed, and repaired by the localities to which they are allotted for use; all other election expenses are paid out of the local funds. In Germany, the polling expenses are defrayed locally.

In Norway, election to the Storting is said to be absolutely free of expense.

In no European country, but Great Britain and Ireland, is the expense of printing ballot papers, provision of ballot boxes, voting compartments, forms of nomination and return, travelling of presiding officers, and conveyance of boxes, etc., to the place of counting votes, and declaration of the poll placed upon the candidates. In this country, the above expenses, known as "the returning officer's expenses," are divided equally between the various candidates.

PART IV.

Mode of conducting Elections.

33. All writs issued by the clerk to the Crown to the returning officer of every constituency shall bear the same date, and shall on that day be issued.

The returning officer of every parliamentary constituency shall appoint the day for the nomination of candidates to be not later than the fourth day after the day on which he receives the writ, and the day for taking the first poll to be the third Saturday after the date on which the writ is issued.

In every Parliamentary constituency which has one representative only, the returning officer shall declare the total number of votes cast, including spoilt votes; and if any one of the candidates has obtained more than one-half of this number of votes, the returning officer shall declare this candidate duly elected, and shall proceed as provided in the Ballot Act, 1872. But if no one of the candidates has obtained more than one-half of the total number of votes cast, the returning officer shall declare the election undecided, and shall give public notice that a second poll will be taken.

34. In boroughs which return two representatives to parliament, the returning officer shall declare the total number of voting papers used as hereinbefore provided, and if two of the candidates shall each have obtained more than one-half of this number of votes, he shall declare these two candidates duly elected. If none of the candidates has obtained more than one-half of the aforesaid number of votes, the returning officer shall declare the election undecided, and shall give public notice that a second poll will be taken. And if one of the candidates only has obtained more than one-half of the aforesaid number of votes, the returning officer shall declare this candidate only to be duly elected, and he shall give public notice that, in respect of one representative, the election is undecided, and a second poll will be taken for this representative.

35. Whenever a second poll is necessary, as provided in the previous sections, it shall be the duty of the returning officer to appoint the next succeeding Saturday to be the day for taking the second poll.

36. The candidates at the second poll shall be not more than three times the number of members to be elected, and shall be the highest candidates at the first poll who shall not have given notice of retirement in writing to the returning officer before 8 a.m. on the Thursday next preceding the day of election. No new candidates shall be nominated for the second poll.

37. After the second poll, the returning officer shall declare the number of votes for each candidate, and in constituencies which elect one representative only, he shall declare the candidate who obtains at the second poll the greatest number of votes, to be duly elected; and in boroughs which elect two representatives, he shall

declare those two candidates who obtain the highest number of votes, to be duly elected. Provided always that in case one of the representatives in boroughs which elect two representatives shall have been declared duly elected at the first poll, then the returning officer shall declare that candidate only who at the second poll obtains the highest number of votes to be duly elected.

38. All ballot papers shall be burnt immediately after the declaration of the poll, in the presence of the returning officer and the candidates or their agents, and a certificate of their destruction, signed by the returning officer and the witnesses, shall be forwarded to the clerk of the Crown, or the speaker, with the election return.

The proposal contained in this part is of extreme importance. We have suffered too long under the tyranny of the minority. Without the second ballot, there can be no certainty that the representation of the majority in a constituency will obtain the seat. Until we get this reform, the labour candidate will always be in danger of being squeezed out by the official wire-pullers, under the plea of not endangering the seat. With second ballot he might insist on going to the poll and proving whether the electors preferred him to the official whig. Whichever of them got the smaller number of votes could then retire, and leave the other to fight the conservative at the second ballot.

This proposal has already been tried in many continental countries.

In Germany, where no candidate has obtained a clear majority of votes, and a new ballottage takes place in consequence, the expense, which for a town of 100,000 inhabitants, rarely exceeds from £15 to £20 in each case, is borne exactly as before.

In France, a second ballot is required in all cases where no candidate has received (a) the absolute majority of the votes polled, (b) a number equal to one-fourth of the electors on the roll. The ballottage, or second ballot takes place on the second Sunday following the day of first return. On this occasion, that candidate is elected, in whose favour the relative majority of votes is recorded whatever the number of votes may be. If an equal number of votes is given to two candidates, the elder of the two is declared elected. The state pays the same expenses at the second elections as it does at the first.

In Italy, the candidate is elected who obtains the greatest number of votes, provided that number is above one-eighth of the electors on the roll. In the Netherlands, a second ballot takes place whenever no candidate obtains an absolute majority. The second ballot, when necessary, takes place about fourteen days after, and a plurality of votes is sufficient. If the votes are equal, the eldest is elected; and if the ages are the same, the question is decided by lot. At the second ballot twice as many candidates as there are persons to be elected are submitted to the vote.

In Norway, a second ballot is taken only when two candidates poll the same number of votes.

In Switzerland, an absolute majority is required, and when this is not obtained, a second ballot is taken amongst all the candidates. In the event of no absolute majority at the second ballot, a third is taken at which the number of candidates must not exceed three times the number of persons to be elected. Should it do so, those candidates who have received the lowest number of votes must retire until the limit is arrived at.

Anything in the shape of minority or proportional representation appears unworkable, and all election procedure should be as simple as possible.

Two incidental but valuable reforms enacted by this section are the holding of all elections on one day, and the abolition of the power of scrutiny by the destruction of the used ballot papers. This will, for the first time, make it perfectly clear that the ballot is absolutely secret.

In France, Germany, Natal, and Victoria, all elections are held on one day.

PART V.

Payment of Members.

39. At the end of every month the speaker of the House of Commons shall issue to every member of the house an order on the treasury for £25; provided that in no case shall this payment be made to a member who shall be in receipt of a salary or pension of £300 per annum, or more, paid out of public funds: provided also that where a member shall be in receipt of a salary or pension of less than £300 per annum, paid out of public funds, he shall only be entitled as a member of parliament to such payment as shall make the total sum paid to him out of public funds not more than £300 per annum: provided also that a proportionate sum shall be deducted from every monthly payment for every day's absence from parliamentary duties without permission from the house.

40. That every member of the House of Commons shall be provided by the speaker, at the commencement of each parliament, with a free railway pass of the first class, which shall entitle him to travel without payment, on any railway in Great Britain and Ireland: provided that every member representing any constituency in Scotland or Ireland not accessible by railway, shall be supplied with a free steamboat pass, which shall entitle him to use, without payment, all steamboats licensed to carry passengers to or from any part of such constituency. No payment shall be made for this to any railway company, or owner of any steamboat.

The proposal to pay members of parliament is not an untried and new-fangled innovation, but a reversion to old constitutional custom, both in England and Scotland. "The custom began with the commencement of representation from a principle of common equity." In Scotland, the payment was made in accordance with the terms of a statute dated 1427, which has been preserved. It is supposed to have been copied from an English statute that has been lost. Professor Thorold Rogers says that in the reign of Edward I. "the member of parliament had daily wages; the knights or county members receiving more—the amount is not invariable—than the burgesses. When the Parliament was prorogued or dismissed, the writs for payment were made out, and the time during which the House sat exactly calculated." A judgment of Lord Chancellor Nottingham after the dissolution of Parliament in 1681 proves that the payment was not merely a voluntary contribution by the constituencies. Thomas King, M.P. for Harwich, presented a petition stating "that he had served as burgesse in Parliament for the said burrough severall yeares, and did give his constant attendance therein; but that the said burrough had not paid him his wages, though often requested so to do." Notice being given to the Corporation of Harwich, and the facts being verified, a writ was ordered to be issued, *de expensis burgencium levandis*. This was probably the last order so made. "I know no reason," said Lord Campbell, commenting on this judgment, "in point of law, why any member may not insist on payment of his wages. For this point in the People's Charter—payment of wages—no new law is required." An Act of 1541 made the payment of wages depend upon attendance in the House throughout the whole session. Payment of members is required to enable constituencies to freely choose their members, to give the public complete control over their members, and compel them to perform their duties with diligence and efficiency. An equitable and convenient adjustment of burdens is made by the payment of members out of the state, and the election expenses out of the local exchequers.

COUNTRY.	PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURE.	
Belgium	Deputies receive 430 francs (£17) monthly during Session, unless permanently living in the place of Session. Paid Monthly.	
Denmark	All Members of Rigsdag receive 6 kroner (7s. 6d.) a day during Session.	Travelling expenses between Copenhagen and constituencies at opening and close of session.
France	Senators and Deputies receive 9,000 francs (£360) a year. Simple censure by the Chamber involves the loss of half salary for one month; censure with exclusion, half salary for two months.	Travelling expenses are paid to all Colonial representatives.
Germany		Free railway travelling during session.
Greece	Members receive 2,000 drachmas (£70) for each ordinary Session. Special Session, from 1,000 to 1,500 drachmas (£35 to £50). Salaried Deputies only receive balance to equal 2,000 drachmas.	
Italy		Free railway travelling and free postage.
Netherlands ..	All Members of the States General are paid— 1st Chamber .. 8 florins a day. 2nd Chamber, 2,000 florins a year.	75 cents an hour of travel for each session.
Norway	All Members of the Storting receive 13s. 4d. a day during Session of three months.	Travelling expenses.
Portugal	Deputies receive 100,000 reis (£22) a month during Session.	
Sweden	Members of the Lower Chamber receive 1,200 kroner (£66 13s. 4d.) for Session of four months; 10 kroner a day for Extraordinary Session; 10 kroner deducted for each day's absence.	Travelling expenses.
Switzerland ..	Members of the Federal Assembly receive 12 francs a day during Session. No payment during absence.	20 centimes a kilometre (2½d. a mile) travelling expenses.
United States ..	Senators, Representatives, and Delegates receive \$5,000 (£1,000) per annum. Paid monthly.	20 cents. a mile for travelling, once per session each way, from residence to seat of Congress.

COUNTRY.	PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURE.	
Canada	\$6, or £1 5s. a day to Members of both Houses, provided Session does not exceed 30 days.* If it exceeds the allowance, \$600 (£120) a Session. Deduction of \$5 a day for absence. * Same in provincial legislatures, except Nova Scotia, \$450 (£90).	10 cents. a mile travelling expenses, once a session, from residence to place of session.
New Zealand ..	£1 a day during Session, subject to actual attendance. No payment under this head to the Speaker, Chairman, Ministers, or Members residing in town where Legislature meets, or within 15 miles of it.	Free travelling to and from Parliament.
Newfoundland ..	Legislative Council, } President, \$240 per Session.. .. } Members, \$120 House of Assembly, Speaker .. \$923 Members (Outpost) \$291 Members (Capital) \$194 Deduction for Non-Attendance.	
Brazil (under the Empire)	Senators, 3,600 milvis .. (£400 a year) Congress, 2,400 milvis (£270 a year)	Travelling allowance to Members of Congress.
South Australia .	£200 a year to Members of both Houses not in receipt of official salaries.	
Queensland ..	£2 2s. for each day's attendance, not to exceed £200 a year.	
Victoria	£300 a year to Members not in receipt of official salary.	Travelling allowance.

PART VI.

Duration of Parliaments.

41. That the present and succeeding parliaments shall have continuance for three years and no longer, to be accounted from the day on which by the writ of summons the parliament shall be appointed to meet, unless this present or any parliament hereafter to be summoned shall be sooner dissolved.

Prior to the Revolution of 1688, the duration of parliaments was entirely within the control of the Sovereign. One of the parliaments of Charles II. sat eighteen years. The Triennial Act was passed in 1694. Its preamble declares "that frequent and new parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement of King and people." The Septennial Act, one of the earliest measures of the first parliament of George I., was nominally based on a desire to relieve the country of the "grievous and burdensome" expense of elections, and also from "the violent and lasting heats and animosities among the subjects of the realm," but was really aimed at the "restless and Popish faction," which was "designing and endeavouring to renew the Rebellion within this Kingdom and an invasion from abroad." The dangers of 1714 have passed away, and the Septennial Act should therefore have been repealed more than a century and a half ago, but all attempts at repeal have been unsuccessful. The reversion to Triennial Parliaments is the least reform that can be accepted, and perhaps combines most of the advantages of Annual Parliaments without their drawbacks.

The duration of Colonial Parliaments varies considerably. In Cape Colony, Canada, and Queensland, five years; in Newfoundland, four years; in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand, three years.

