

chisement because it is the forerunner of the disfranchisement of white wage-earners—because the more the elective franchise is restricted the easier it will be for combined and organized wealth and monopoly to govern; and it also favors it because it promises to give the party control of states in which hitherto it has had a merely nominal existence.—Dubuque (Ia.) Telegraph.

#### A PLEA FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

For The Public.

The election is well over, and we are gradually settling back to the consideration of matters of still more practical politics. This being the case, I would like to commend with as much force as possible a notion of method to all reformers.

We all know how difficult it is to make even one convert to any advanced economic idea. One reason for this is that people in general do not care to trouble themselves deeply about anything. Especially do they not wish to bother about others' suffering, having enough of their own, or being safely out of its reach, as the case may be. Often, however, we find those who would really be willing to consider new theories, but who say to us that there is no use in doing so. The theories may be good, but they are not practical now. They have not enough adherents to command majorities. In some far future they may be worth while analyzing, but not now. Therefore, why spend thought upon them?

Thus we fail to attract interest which we might have easily, if anything less than majorities were useful in our legislative system.

This condition would not alter to one of much greater propagandic ease were we to have direct legislation by the people, though that would be of benefit. We had really a popular vote upon imperialism lately, though complicated by other issues—mainly bread-and-butter ones. What we need most is not so much that the people may be readily divided en masse to deliver a majority verdict upon some issue they have already made up their minds about. We need far more that all political creeds which any portion of the people believe shall have the means of being held up before the nation as forcefully as the numbers of those believing them warrant. In other words, we need the representation of our ideas in our representative bodies. We do not have it. Majorities only are represented, because majorities only can elect.

Let us take, for example, the state of Missouri. Probably two-fifteenths of the voters in the state are prohibitionists. I am not a prohibitionist, but I think that under those circumstances they should have two of Missouri's 15 representatives in congress. If not, why not? But they have absolutely no representation in congress, because they have no majority in any one district, and consequently vote for persons and policies they do not like, thereby swelling the influence of such policies to their own discomfort. The single tax men in Missouri are one-fifteenth of the voters. But they must vote for something they only partly believe in, and have no representation that is quite fearless and outspoken, because their mouthpieces are more indebted to others for majorities. The republicans of Missouri are a very large proportion, but have usually two representatives out of 15, because the districts are arranged to give a small majority in each against them. Possibly the socialists in the state could cast one-fifteenth of the vote, being numerous in the cities and labor unions. But instead of perhaps two prohibitionists, one single taxer, a socialist, five republicans and six democrats, the congressional delegation of Missouri is more likely to be two republicans and 13 democrats. Does anyone call this representation? It is nearer misrepresentation.

Not only is congress not a miniature of the nation as it actually stands, but this fact reacts upon the nation's units, and they will not take an interest in a new idea because it will not count. What is the consequence? We have two large political bodies, each naturally ultra-conservative because needing a majority. In order to get that majority there must be a highly organized machine, delicately responsive to central management, and therefore peculiarly fitted for oligarchic control, which is susceptible to corrupt influences, and finds it easy to work through them. The people are compelled to choose between these two parties or nothing.

With proportional representation, on the other hand, we should have at once probably half a dozen parties, each of which would have at least a voice in the affairs of the country. Machine politics would immediately become less powerful. There would be no parties so large as now. Probably the tendency would be for parties to multiply and become comparatively smaller. They would combine upon issues strictly of the moment, which would, of course, still be decided by majorities. Upon theoretical questions there would be a

willingness to consider, a responsiveness, and therefore a progressiveness not possible while minorities are unrepresented. For any sound reform there would be hope, for it could obtain a hearing, not as now, by stealth and skillful maneuvering, but by its own few adherents, responsible to their electors. Of course what is true of the nation and congress, is also true of states, cities and their representative bodies.

This political reform, like all political reforms, is only a means to social and economic reforms. But without democracies instead of monarchies, or without real representation instead of unreal, social reforms are slow coming. Moreover, we can much more easily bring about a political reform than an economic one—remember the Australian ballot laws. Personally I am very sure I can make 20 converts to proportional representation to one, for instance, to the single tax. These 20 can do likewise. I rarely find a man—not one in 30—who will disagree with the proportional representation idea. More than half will disagree with direct legislation. More than nine-tenths will at least withhold opinion on the single tax. Are not these considerations very strong arguments that all who champion minority ideas should combine upon definite propaganda of proportional representation? It would soon be followed, I think, by opportunity for its gradual introduction.

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#### AMONG THE DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA.

Probably most have heard more or less of the Doukhobors. This Russian sect of uneducated peasants has been suffering persecution at home for a century and more because of the fact that its members abjured the established church and condemned war and military service. But it was not until about 13 years ago, when universal conscription became the rule, that their troubles became unbearable. These inoffensive people, who have charmed all who have met them by their simple piety and kindness, were banished from their homes and exposed to all kinds of hardships. At last, some influential Russians stirred themselves on behalf of these oppressed peasants and obtained as a great favor from the czar permission for them to leave the country at their own expense. They had but little of their savings left after these years of sorrow, and it was necessary for the quakers of England and America to