

Letter

MANAGER-PROOF REPRESENTATION

SIR, - Perhaps Leonard Tooke would like to examine how parties and voters actually do behave in a PR election.

Let us take two examples. The first is the last Irish general election but one, in which the Finna Gael party was divided for and against the "Just Society" programme devised by its younger element. There was no question of either not being "official" candidates; in each constituency the Finna Gael team included candidates of both kinds, the voters had a free choice between them, and in general they preferred the Just Society candidates. The complexion of the parliamentary party therefore changed in that direction, and the leadership changed.

A party would usually be expected to behave like that, for (if it is large enough to have hopes of winning more than one seat in a constituency) it must in any case select more than one candidate, and it would be throwing away votes if it annoyed any sections by refusing to include a candidate supported by that section.

Occasionally however a party does show that kind of foolishness; let us see what happened in a recent instance of this. In the PR elections to the Australian Senate in 1970, a clique within the Liberal party secured the exclusion from the party's list of candidates of Michael Townley, an able and popular young man. He therefore stood as an Independent and was elected easily while the official Liberal candidates suffered a loss of votes caused by the voters' resentment of the party's action.

An American once referred to the single transferable vote form of proportional representation as "manager-proof"; it is.

Yours faithfully,

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What we are in for

(Culled from *European Community*)

OF COURSE, IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY . . .

WHAT WOULD you say if someone took some money from you, gave it to someone else to produce unmarketable goods at a high rate of profit and then claimed virtuous credit for bestowing your goods upon the needy? Part of the EEC's butter surplus is being shipped to developing countries - £13 million worth of it. Recipients are Palestinian refugees and the needy in Burundi, Egypt, Jordan etc.

WORKING ON COMMISSION

THE EEC COMMISSION is seeking to introduce common rules for similar customs violations throughout the Community. At present France, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg allow customs officers to keep a part of the fines they collect. Road hauliers have complained that in France in particular fines have been disproportionate to the offence, which in the circumstances is not surprising.

WHO NEEDS THE PSYCHIATRIST?

LEARNER DRIVERS would have to pass a character test before getting their licences under Commission proposals to harmonize laws on driving tests. The Commission said common regulations should be enforced by 1974 on the issue of driving licences in all member countries.

To get a licence, applicants would have to pass a practical and theoretical test and would undergo a medical examination and a "psycho-technical" test to see whether they were mentally suited to driving a vehicle.

MORE FULL-HEARTED CONSENT?

A CALL FOR the creation of a European political authority was made by Jean Monnet last month. M. Monnet, the High Authority's first President, said: "If Europe is to speak with a single voice and take part with the great powers in peacefully solving universal problems, it is necessary to form a European political authority gradually. When the time comes, the people's voice must express itself in democratic European institutions."

ENOUGH TO MAKE ONE FERMENT

REGULATION 817 of the Common Market, theoretically binding in Britain after February 1, 1973, governs the production of wine. It lays down where wine may be produced, the vines to be used, alcohol content, quality control, cultivation of vines, and permissible output per hectare.