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# POLITICAL SCIENCE

## QUARTERLY

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### BARRIERS AGAINST DEMOCRACY IN THE BRITISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM

**P**LURAL voting, university representation, non-payment of members of Parliament and the official expenses thrown upon candidates for the House of Commons are the four most obvious anomalies in the British electoral system. Each of these anomalies has existed for at least three centuries. Each grew out of the gradual but continuous warping of the electoral system—originally quite democratic—that went on between the fifteenth century and the Reform Act of 1832. Each had its origin in the eager desire of either the Crown or the landed aristocracy to control elections to the House of Commons.

Since 1832 it has been repeatedly conceded that all these four warpings of the original electoral system are anomalies; and all would have been swept away years ago, had it not been that they stood as barriers against a democratic House of Commons and, as such, were vigorously defended by Whigs and Conservatives in the House of Commons as well as in the House of Lords. The Whigs easily dominated Liberal administrations until after the split in the Liberal party arising out of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886. Whig dominance of Liberal cabinets was not of the past until the Campbell-Bannerman administration was formed at the end of 1905. Then the Whigs were not sufficiently strong or numerous to secure again their control over the Liberal administration, because between 1886 and 1905 all the more powerful Whigs had gravitated to

the Conservative party and had become indistinguishable in policy or tradition from the Conservatives.

Not one of these four anomalies was ever assailed in a government bill until after the Liberals were completely free of the Whigs; and until Liberal cabinets free from Whig control appeared it was useless, as the history of the Reform Act of 1884 and the Redistribution Act of 1885 adequately proves, for Liberals and Radicals to look to a Liberal government to assail these barriers against a democratic franchise and a democratic House of Commons. Since 1884, all these anomalies have worked to the advantage of the Conservative party. Hence, while Conservatives have repeatedly conceded that none of these barriers would be set up if a new electoral system were to be created, if they are now to be swept away it is inevitable that the reform must be undertaken by a Liberal government.

My purpose in these pages is to deal with the freehold voter and with university representation; to show how each of these anomalies crept into the electoral system and to indicate the influence of each. University representation will receive especial consideration, for the reason that singularly little attention has been bestowed on this part of the English representative system.

#### I. *Plural voting based on property qualifications*

No elector, whatever may be his qualification—and there are today seventeen different ways in which a man can qualify as a parliamentary elector—can vote more than once in the same constituency. Non-resident voters, some of whom in rare instances may vote as often as forty times in as many divisions at one general election,<sup>1</sup> represent a development in county as distinct from borough elections. It was in the counties that the non-resident voter, exercising the franchise under the Forty-shilling Freeholder Act of 1430, first established himself in the sixteenth century. Just when returning officers at county elections began to ignore the plain direction of the act of 1430, that “choosers of knights of the shire be resident within the shire,” it is impossible to ascertain. This abuse apparently

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hansard, May 18, 1892. For an instance of a man with 18 votes, cf. *ibid.* May 26, 1867; and for an instance of a man with 37 votes, cf. *ibid.* May 14, 1906.

crept into the electoral system before the end of the fifteenth century; but it does not seem possible to determine to what extent the original requirement of residence in the county broke down in this or in the sixteenth century. What is certain is that letters, legal text-books and hand-books for sheriffs, written in the seventeenth century, show clearly that the residential qualification for county voters was long of the past in the reign of Charles II, and that in this reign non-resident voters were pouring into county constituencies pretty much as they do at elections at the present time.<sup>1</sup>

From the time this corruption became established until the reign of Anne, a freehold of the requisite value was the only condition necessary to a county vote; for not until 1712 was the exercise of the county franchise made contingent upon the assessment of the lands or tenements in respect of which the vote was enjoyed to taxes, church rates and parish dues.<sup>2</sup> When once the non-resident voter was well established, the creation of freeholds to qualify voters soon followed—creations which would have been of little value had the residential qualification of the act of 1430 not fallen into desuetude. From as early as the reign of Charles I this method of creating votes—“faggot votes” as they came to be called—was in service; and the ingenuity of lawyers was so continuously and so successfully exercised, and returning officers were so easy-going in their interpretation of the law of 1430, that when Parliament began the reform of the representative system in 1832 it was stated in the House of Commons that there were eighty-five various qualifications for a vote. Included in this number were, of course, the qualifications in the boroughs of England, and in the boroughs and counties of Ireland, where the electoral system was a replica of that of England with all its corruptions. The potwalloper, the scot-and-lot, the burgage and the freeman franchise and the corporation franchise were all in this list. Included also were the superiority in the counties of Scotland and the corporation franchise in that country; but at least seventy of the eighty-five avenues to the franchise had been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dalton, *Office of Sheriff*, edition of 1682, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> 10 Anne, c. 31.

thrown open by the astonishingly wide and even absurd interpretations of the word freehold in the act of 1430.

During the eighteenth century and until 1832 the freehold vote had a value which cannot be said to attach to it today. Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and many other large towns in the midlands and the north of England—towns which had developed enormously with the industrial progress of the eighteenth century—were until 1832 without members in the House of Commons; and it was only the freeholders in these places who could vote at parliamentary elections. They voted for knights of the shire; and when the Reform Bill was framed, and it was settled that these places were at last to become parliamentary boroughs, one of the problems of the Grey administration was what should be done with these freeholders. An analogous problem was presented by the freeholders in some then existing parliamentary boroughs, who up to 1832 had voted in these boroughs as potwallopers, scot-and-lot voters or freemen, and who by virtue of their freeholds had also voted for knights of the shire.

It would not be safe to assert that the plural voter was not assailed in the long popular agitation that preceded the Reform Act of 1832; but it can be said that he was not assailed when the bill was before the House of Commons. The act as passed put an end to freehold voting in those towns and cities where it had existed. It also deprived occupying freeholders in towns of their right to vote for knights of the shire; and it provided that non-occupying freeholders in towns were to vote in the counties. There were many protests against this plan when the bill was in committee. The Conservatives objected that it was unfair to the agricultural interests—that it materially weakened the position of the landed interest. Every man, said Praed, ought to vote for that place in which his property was situated. The knights of the shire were those who were supposed to represent the agricultural interest, and their return ought not to be influenced by those who had no direct connection with that interest. On the other hand, the cities and towns ought to return individuals to represent the manufacturing and commercial interests. "Let the town freeholders," he continued,

“have votes in the towns with which they are connected, and with which they have a common interest. Do not send them into the county to vote, from which they have separate and distinct interests.” Praed’s speech was made in proposing an amendment including town freeholders in the borough constituencies. Russell, who was in charge of the bill, opposed the amendment. He would not concede that the agricultural interest had cause to complain of the clause as it stood. Praed’s plan, Russell objected, would tend to the deterioration and injury of the borough constituencies. Moreover,

it would also tend to create a division and a feeling of jealousy between the agricultural and the manufacturing interests, the union and combination of which alone should be the object of the legislature. . . . Again, in small boroughs it would introduce the system of splitting land into small freeholds for the purpose of promoting particular interests; but it was not possible that a man who had property in a county would divide it for the purpose of making votes, as the number of votes would be so great as to prevent any number he could create from having any material effect on the election. The very reverse, however, would be the case in towns, and the smaller they were the greater effect it would have.

Peel supported the amendment because it simplified the right of voting and would prevent boroughs from interfering in or influencing county elections. Sugden also took the same line, because the clause as it stood would throw the representation of some counties into the hands of town populations and deluge the agricultural interest with voters from outside the counties. The amendment was defeated. Since 1885 there has been no election at which the Liberals have not bitterly complained of just those conditions that Sugden, who was a Tory, had foreshadowed. The Redistribution Act of 1885 was not free from gerrymanders; but the throwing of town freeholders into counties, which since the extension of the franchise in 1884 has cost the Liberals scores of seats at every general election, was clearly a gerrymander in the interest of the Whigs. All through the eighteenth century and up to 1832 the electoral strength of the Whigs lay mostly in the large boroughs, and in quite a num-

ber of county constituencies the Whigs owed success at the polls to the votes of freeholders in large urban communities which were not directly represented in the House of Commons. Hence in the Reform Act the Whigs were careful that there should be no changes that would jeopard the strength they derived from the boroughs, and from men in industry, commerce and trade who were freeholders in boroughs and who as such were entitled to a vote at county elections.

From 1832 to 1867, accordingly, it was the Conservatives who complained of the influence of town freeholders in determining county elections. It was the Conservatives and not the Whigs and Liberals who in this period suffered most from the outvoters, of whom the Liberals, the Radicals and the Labor party have complained so bitterly since 1885. Had the Conservative Reform Bill of 1859 got beyond its first reading, it was the intention of the government to remedy the grievance of which Peel and Sugden complained in 1832. Disraeli, in introducing this bill, used the same argument in regard to these outvoters that Praed had used in support of his amendment to the Reform Act. "There is no doubt," he said, "that a man should vote for the place where he resides, or for the locality in which he is really and substantially interested." He recalled the manufacture of freehold votes that had been going on for ten years prior to 1859, and also how these outvoters from the boroughs influenced county elections:

It was proclaimed with great triumph that when a gentleman stood for a county his neighbors who dwelt in the county might vote for him, but some large town in the district would pour out its legions by railway, and on the nomination of some club in the metropolis would elect the representative for the county.

The Reform Bill of 1859 failed. In 1867, when Disraeli was again in charge of a reform bill, conditions in the House of Commons were against any change not acceptable to the Whigs and Liberals; and the borough freeholders, of whom Disraeli had complained, were left where they had been put by the Whig

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli, *Speeches on Reform, 1848-1866*, p. 190.

government in 1832. In the bill of 1884—Gladstone's Reform Bill—it was from the first the intention of the government that there should be no interference with the town freeholder. In introducing the bill, Gladstone announced that it left untouched the ancient-right franchises—freeman, liveryman and burgess tenure, and whatever other miscellaneous franchises there were surviving from the old system. In the debates on this bill, as in 1831 and 1859, the Conservatives objected to town freeholders voting in the counties. This objection was made at first reading,<sup>1</sup> at the earliest opportunity that offered, and it was urged in committee also. The government, however, stood by the 112,000 town freeholders. It gave no encouragement to members on its own side of the House, such as McLaren, Labouchere and Arthur Arnold, who were intent on putting an end to plural voting. Mr. McLaren proposed an amendment which would have put the franchise on a "one-man-one-vote" basis. It was opposed by Gladstone; and when Mr. McLaren persisted in going to a division, only 43 members in a House of 278 went into the lobby with him.<sup>2</sup>

The next attack on the plural voter—non-resident county voter, borough freeholder, liveryman of the city of London and university voter—came in 1892. The Liberals had then been in opposition since 1886. The attack was made in a bill introduced by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and supported by Sir William Harcourt, Sir George O. Trevelyan, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Henry Broadhurst, Sir Horace Davey and Mr. Asquith, all of the opposition front bench. It was a forlorn hope; but it committed the Liberal party and its leaders to the principle of "one man one vote."

Nothing was done for this principle in the Parliament of 1892–95, in which the Liberals were in a majority; but almost the first bill carried through the House of Commons in the first session of the Parliament of 1906–10 was a government bill abolishing all plural voting, much on the lines of the bill introduced in 1892. The Liberal majority, irrespective of the Nationalists, who numbered 83, was at this time 271. The

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, March 3, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* May 26, 1884.

Conservatives, who since 1885 have no longer had any grievance against the town freeholder in elections in county divisions, opposed the bill at every stage. They could, however, muster only 61 against it at first reading; 95 at second reading, and never more than 96 at any of the divisions at committee stage. The third reading was carried by 333 votes to 104. In the House of Lords the position as regards numerical strength of parties was reversed, and the bill was rejected by 143 to 43.<sup>1</sup>

The exact number of plural voters on the register on which the general elections of January and December, 1910, were taken is not ascertainable. The official returns compiled when the revising barristers had finished their work, in the autumn of 1909, set the number of ownership voters at 608,270 and that of university voters at 48,154. It is often stated, however, that there are at least half a million plural voters, and as frequently it is estimated that at least eighty per cent of them are of the Conservative party. What is certain about the election in January, 1910, is that there were then 78 county divisions carried by the Conservatives—69 in England, one in Wales, three in Scotland and five in Ireland—where the ownership vote, which is usually an outvote, exceeded in number the Conservative majority.<sup>2</sup>

Since the break-up of the Liberal party in 1886, the plural voter in all his varieties has been an obvious support to the Conservative party; and it was because the plural voter had come to be the greatest of barriers against a democratic House of Commons that the House of Lords threw out the bill of 1906.

## II. *University representation*

The city of Oxford and the borough of Cambridge were represented from the reign of Edward I. In each the right to elect belonged, in the sixteenth century and until the reform of 1832, to the mayor and corporation and the freemen. The men of the universities, the heads of houses and the professors, were not necessarily freemen. In the sixteenth century not every resident could make good his claim to the freedom and

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, December 10, 1906.      <sup>2</sup> Asquith, Speech at Oxford, March 18, 1910.

thus to a right to vote in the freeman boroughs for members of the House of Commons. Only occasionally, therefore, could a man permanently attached to the university vote as a freeman. Moreover, in the sixteenth century members of the university who were of the clergy had no right to vote for a representative in the House of Commons, because at this time, and until after the Restoration, the clergy were represented in Convocation, taxed by Convocation, and had no place in the parliamentary system. How far the heads of houses and the professors at the universities were of the electorates of Oxford and Cambridge in the sixteenth century is not now easy to determine. The presumption is that many of them were not of the electorate. What is certain is that, about the time that boroughs like Newark, which had permitted their representation to lapse, were seeking to come again into the representative system, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were petitioning the crown for representation. Between 1570 and the end of the reign of Elizabeth there were no fewer than six petitions for enfranchisement from one or the other or both of the universities.<sup>1</sup> One of these petitions, that of the University of Cambridge in 1573, was addressed to Lord Burleigh; it urged that each of the universities should have two members in Parliament,

which Mr. Speaker<sup>2</sup> and others think requisite; as they [the universities] will not always have such as your Lordship to assist them, not having any burgesses in the House who can so aptly answer objections against the universities as they that remain in them and best know their present state.<sup>3</sup>

Although these petitions from the universities for direct representation began as early as 1570, enfranchisement was not conceded until 1603. Then both universities renewed their claim, and representation was given them by charters granted by James I. The phraseology of these charters is of interest to-

<sup>1</sup> Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, vol. ii, pp. 269, 401, 435, 460, 585; *Calendar of State Papers, 1569-79*, p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Wray, April 2, 1571-May 29, 1571.

<sup>3</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, 1569-79*, p. 40.

day, because of the variety of grounds on which the representation of the universities has since been justified. In the charter granted to Cambridge in 1603 we read:

As in the colleges of our university there are many local statutes, constitutions *etc.*, and as in past times, and especially of late, many statutes and acts of Parliament have been made concerning them, it therefore appears to us worth while and necessary that the said university should have burgesses of its own in Parliament who from time to time may make known to the supreme Court of Parliament the true state of that university; so that no statute nor act may offer any prejudice or injury to them or any of them severally without just and due notice and information being had in that respect.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Cecil was at this time chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and Sir Edward Coke was attorney-general; and it was mainly through the instrumentality of Cecil and Coke that, after more than thirty years of agitation, representation was conceded to the universities. Coke, who was of Trinity College, Cambridge, and who had been speaker of the House of Commons in 1593, communicated to the universities that their plea had been granted; and in his letter to Cambridge he offered some advice as to the men who should be chosen to represent the university in the House of Commons. His counsel was that choice should be made "of some that are not of the Convocation House," because of the likelihood that objection would be taken in the House of Commons to members of Convocation; and he urged further that professors of civil law should be chosen as the first members.<sup>2</sup>

It was provided in the charters that the burgesses were to be "two of the more discreet and efficient men of the university for the time being," and that they were to be "at the charge and costs of the chancellor, masters and scholars." The payment of wages to members from boroughs and counties was nearly at an end by 1603. Few boroughs or counties were called upon by their representatives to pay the statutory wages

<sup>1</sup> Huber, *English Universities*, vol. iii, p. 421. Cf. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, vol. iii, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> Mullinger, *University of Cambridge*, pp. 459, 460.

and expenses after the reign of Henry VIII. But the theory of the constitution in 1603 was still that wages and expenses were paid; and for a few years the University of Cambridge complied with the condition of the charter which required that its representatives in the House of Commons should have their wages and expenses defrayed by the university.<sup>1</sup> As long as wages survived in the boroughs and the counties, they were levied on the voters like any other municipal or county charge. It would seem that at Oxford and Cambridge they were a charge on the universities, and that representation in Parliament threw no burden on the men of the universities to whom in 1603 the right to vote for members of the House of Commons had been conceded. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether at either Oxford or Cambridge wages and the payment of the traveling expenses to and from London and the *per diem* expenses of the members while in London survived the reign of James I. By 1624 Cambridge University, as regards its representation in the House of Commons, was easily under the control of the court<sup>2</sup>; and with court or territorial control of any borough, as the history of the break-down of the system of local payment of wages shows, such local payment to representatives invariably disappeared. In the Parliament of 1603–04 both universities were represented by men of the qualifications suggested by Coke in his letter to Cambridge—men who were of the universities in the strictest sense of the term, since they were resident in the universities and continuously associated with their life. Henry Mowtlow, LL.D., of King's, public orator of 1589, and Nicholas Steward, LL.D., of Trinity,<sup>3</sup> were the first members for Cambridge; and Oxford, to which Coke had given similar counsel, was represented by Sir Francis Dunne, knight, and Sir Thomas Crompton, knight, both doctors of civil law.<sup>4</sup> Sir Isaac Newton represented Cambridge in the Parliaments of 1689 and 1701–02; but, from the first representation of the universities in the Parliament of 1603–04 until the Reform Act of 1832,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar of State Papers, 1623–25, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Mullinger, *op. cit.* p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> Return of Members of Parliament, part i, p. 445.

Pitt, who was one of the members from Cambridge from 1784 to 1806, Charles Abbot, who was one of the members from Oxford from 1806 to 1807 and speaker from 1802 to 1817, and Peel, who was member for Oxford from 1817 to 1829, were the only university members who made for themselves a place in the history of the House of Commons.

The universities were court boroughs as long as it was to the interest of the sovereign to control representation in the House of Commons. After government by party and by cabinet became established, Oxford and Cambridge took on the character that marks them both today. They became, almost as a matter of course, strongholds of the Church of England, for until 1871 only members of the Church of England could be of the university electorate; and as a result of this church connection they became also strongholds of the Tory party.

From 1603 until 1832, when statutory recognition was given to the charters of James I and the right of the universities to representation in the House of Commons was continued, there is little of interest in the representative history of the universities, except the political prominence of a few of their representatives and their unvarying and steadfast loyalty to the Tory party. During this period they gave no trouble to the election committees of the House of Commons. There were no controverted elections. The journals of the House are consequently searched in vain for any information as to election usages. From the first the vice-chancellors of the universities acted as returning officers; and the franchise, as nowadays, was based on membership of the Senate at Oxford or of Convocation at Cambridge. To secure the right to vote, a man must take the bachelor of arts degree; then proceed to the master of arts degree, which is obtained merely by a payment, without any further examination. He must then pay an annual or a commutation fee in order to have his name continued on the books of his college, from which the roll of parliamentary electors is compiled. From 1603 to 1867 attendance at the poll was necessary, and so long as this requirement was maintained the number of voters was small. It could not have been otherwise with Crown control and the poor facilities of the seventeenth century

for travel; and it is inconceivable that the number would increase much until the era of stage coaches and of less expensive travel, beginning in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1727 only 377 electors<sup>1</sup> polled at Cambridge; as late as 1780 the number of voters was only 546; and in 1784, when Pitt, who had been a candidate in 1780, was elected, the number was only 588.<sup>2</sup>

Under the old system, each elector carried to the vice-chancellor in open hall the names of the two candidates for whom he voted on a slip of paper. This was the earliest form of secret ballot in use at parliamentary elections. In all other constituencies, save those of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin (and, after 1867, those of London, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Glasgow and St. Andrews) there was open voting until 1874; and it was a grievance with the early parliamentary reformers—the men who went into this movement about the time of the American Revolution—that, while in all other constituencies electors were compelled to declare in public for whom they polled, at university elections voting was secret.<sup>3</sup> Peers, who by reason of their university qualifications—B. A. and M. A. and payment of fees—were on the roll, were not permitted to vote, for the same reason that they were debarred from voting at borough and county elections. As long also as all bishops were of the House of Lords, bishops were not permitted to vote at university elections. Electors for the old university constituencies had three distinctions which set them apart from any other electors who have participated in the representative system. To qualify, in the old days, they had to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, pass the examinations for the B. A. degree, and make a payment to the university or the college to complete their qualification as members of the Senate or Convocation.

Similarly the representatives of the universities had a peculiar place among members of the House of Commons. Their privileges within the House were those of other members: no par-

<sup>1</sup> Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, iv, 194.

<sup>2</sup> Poll Book, 1780–1882.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* Cambridge Poll Book, 1780, p. iv.

ticular seats were ever assigned them nor was any special consideration shown them. But, from the time property qualifications were imposed in 1710 until all property qualifications were abolished in 1858, the members for the universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin were not required to possess landed or personal property as a qualification for a seat in Parliament. They were favored also in another important particular. Their election expenses, when they had any, were small indeed in comparison with those thrown by usage or by law on other members of the House of Commons. Oxford, it would seem, has for three centuries complied with the condition of the charter of 1603, that "the burgesses were to be at the charge and costs of the chancellor, masters and scholars." In the eighteenth century it had long been the usage that the representatives should be put to no expense in connection with their elections<sup>1</sup>; and, as recently as the general election of 1900, the returning officer at Oxford reported to the secretary of state for the Home Department that none of the columns of the return of election expenses sent from the Home Office to him for filling in were applicable to the election of burgesses for the university, and that no expenses were charged by the returning officer. Cambridge, however, has not adhered so closely to the condition in the charter of 1603. At the election in 1900, there was a charge of £14 8s by the returning officer. There was also an agent's fee of £21, and there were charges for printing and advertising and for expenses of public meetings. But the total expense to the two successful candidates—the late Sir R. C. Jebb and Sir John E. Gorst, who was then of the Conservative party—was only £53.<sup>2</sup>

The older universities were obliged by the terms of their charters to return members of their own bodies; and today the universities of England, Scotland and Ireland, which return in all nine members, are the only constituencies in which outsiders may not be elected.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Oxford during the Last Century* (1857), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> London University, it may be added, follows the Oxford usage. Its member in the House of Commons is put to no expense for his election. *Return of Parliamentary Election Expenses, 1901*, p. 46.

From 1603 to the union of Ireland with Great Britain in 1801, Oxford and Cambridge were the only universities with representatives in the House of Commons at Westminster. University representation did not exist in the Parliament of Scotland; so that at the union of England and Scotland in 1707 there was no addition to the number of university members in the House of Commons. The first addition came in 1801, as a result of the union with Ireland. Then one member was conceded to Trinity College, Dublin. From 1613 to the end of the Irish Parliament, Trinity College had been continuously represented by two members. The franchise and the mode of election were much the same as at Oxford and Cambridge; for the charter from James I enfranchising Trinity was nearly identical in terms with the charters enfranchising the English universities. There was a provision directing that the representatives of Trinity should be of the college; but when Trinity lapsed into a crown or government borough the characteristic ingenuity of Irishmen in working representative institutions easily surmounted that difficulty. If a seat in the House of Commons was needed for some Englishman not of the college, who had come over in the train of the lord lieutenant, he was made a graduate, receiving not an honorary but a regular degree,<sup>1</sup> much as non-residents were at one time made freemen in the English and Irish boroughs, to conform with the old laws which ordained that persons sent to Parliament should be residents of the constituencies which they represented.

Unlike Oxford and Cambridge elections, those held at Trinity occasionally gave trouble to the House of Commons. There were at least two election petitions during the first half of the reign of George III, one in 1777 and the other in 1791. Both were due to the determination of Hely Hutchinson, who was provost and, as such, acted as returning officer, to control the representation of the college, in much the same way as Blessington and Bannow were controlled by the patrons—otherwise the bosses—of those Irish parliamentary boroughs.<sup>2</sup> It could

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Peckwell, *Controverted Election Cases*, vol. i, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Journals of the Irish House of Commons*, vol. ix, p. 321, and vol. xiv, p. 33.

never have been a difficult undertaking to control the representation of Trinity; for in the last half of the eighteenth century the franchise became more restricted than at Oxford and Cambridge, being confined to the provost, fellows and seventy junior scholars (students who were holders of scholarships that ran for five years); and at no time in the eighteenth century did the number of electors exceed one hundred. At the time of the union, many Irish boroughs had to succumb; others were deprived of one of their members. Trinity's right to elect was made secure from the outset, in the negotiations and the legislation that preceded the union; but it was deprived of one member. In the House of Commons at Westminster there was only one member for Trinity until the Reform Act for Ireland that was passed in 1832.

At this time—that is when Parliament, in 1831 and 1832, was for the first time in its existence giving any general consideration to the system of representation on which members of the House of Commons were elected—it was taken for granted that Oxford and Cambridge should continue to send members to Parliament. The rights of these universities to parliamentary representation do not seem to have been challenged. The Grey administration was indeed so enamoured of university representation that, in the Reform Act for Ireland, it restored to Trinity its right to elect two members. In supporting this addition to university representation, Lord Althorp, who was chancellor of the exchequer and one of the most thoroughgoing reformers in the Grey administration, advanced a plea in support of university representation which is as significant today as it was then, but which is quite different from the plea on which Oxford and Cambridge were first admitted to representation in 1603. In the reign of James I the plea was that it was expedient that the universities should be directly represented because their interests might be jeopardized by adverse legislation. This plea was entirely overlooked or ignored by Althorp in 1831, and a new plea was advanced. O'Connell had objected to the proposal, because it would continue a principle of exclusion that was unfair to Roman Catholics; and Sir Charles Wetherell, who was opposed to reform in any shape, had char-

acterized the proposal as a job. "It was deemed expedient," said Althorp, explaining the policy of the government as regards university representation and also replying to O'Connell,

that Oxford and Cambridge should possess their present elective system as a means of protecting the interests of the Established Church; and in conformity with that principle it was thought but fair that the interests of the Established Church in Ireland should be equally protected in that House. On that ground too, he must tell the honorable and learned member for Waterford, that the franchise ought to be confined to Protestant scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Almost a month before the government policy with regard to Dublin University and its representation was announced in the House of Commons, the Earl of Haddington in the House of Lords put in a plea for the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. He moved for a return of the number of graduates who had taken degrees at these universities in divinity and medicine between 1800 and 1830; and the Earl of Roseberry in supporting the motion expressed a hope that parliamentary representation would be conceded to these two universities.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the discussion in the House of Commons on the Reform Bill for Scotland, two Scottish members, Sir George Murray and Sir George Warrender, urged the claims of the universities of Scotland. The constituency, Warrender affirmed, would consist chiefly of Scottish ministers of the church, many of whom had taken degrees at the universities. "And a more honest, upright and independent body of electors," he added, "could not be had in the United Kingdom." Warburton, who was prominent among the Radicals of the Reform Bill era, threatened that if there was a proposal to enfranchise the universities of Scotland he would oppose it, and he thereby gained the distinction of being one of the first Radical members to object to the principle of university representation. From the treasury bench there was an intimation by the lord advocate, who was in charge of the bill, that the subject of the enfranchisement of the universities in Scotland had already been before the govern-

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, March 24, 1831.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* March 8, 1831.

ment.<sup>1</sup> But the Grey administration went no farther than to consider the subject; and there were no further additions to the members from the universities until, by the Reform Acts of 1867, the University of London and the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen and of Edinburgh and of St. Andrews were brought within the electoral system.

Between 1850 and 1867 there were five or six reform bills, all of which, from one cause or another, were abandoned; but, beginning with Lord John Russell's bill of 1854, the governments responsible for these bills, whether Conservative or Whig or Liberal, were committed to the enfranchisement of London University and of the universities of Scotland that had unsuccessfully sought parliamentary representation in 1832. Between 1832 and 1867, however, the movement of which Warburton was the spokesman in 1832 had increased in strength, and there was much opposition to the principle of university representation when the Reform Bills of 1867 for England and Scotland were before the House. This opposition was directed chiefly against the proposal of the Disraeli government to enfranchise the University of Durham, established in 1832, and to join Durham with the University of London in returning one member. The first proposal was that of the two newer English universities London alone should be enfranchised. But at committee stage an amendment was proposed by the government to include Durham. The friends of London University promptly objected to this university being hyphenated with the smaller institution. It was objected that the distance between the seats of the two universities was too great; that Durham had only about two hundred graduates while London had more than two thousand; that London was growing every day while Durham was stationary; and also that there had been a promise in three successive reform bills of enfranchisement for London, while the proposal to include Durham had been sprung upon the House only after the bill had gone into committee. "The two universities," objected Grant Duff, "have no affinity. You might as well talk of joining Tattersall's and the Inns of Court."

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, September 23, 1831.

“Join Durham,” he added, “with one of the older universities.” A Conservative government was in power at this time; but it was a government that did not command a majority in the House of Commons. It was defeated on a division on the first of two amendments necessary to bringing in Durham and joining it with London; and thereafter Disraeli, as leader of the House, was compelled to accept a motion to report progress which had been made by the friends of the University of London.<sup>1</sup>

The following day the contest in committee was resumed. Lowe then objected that Durham was local and provincial, while London was “metropolitan and cosmopolitan, and extending its influence more and more every day all over the world.” “The one university,” he added, “is ecclesiastical. The other is preëminently secular.” Bright began his speech in opposition to the proposal to join Durham with London with the statement that he was not in favor of university representation. He continued:

The representation of the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge was created in times about the worst in our history. The members they have sent to this House, learned as some of them have been, and amiable as many of them have been, have not been representatives such as it would be wise—I speak of their political views—to follow. I therefore say I am not in favor of the representation of universities. If I had the making of a reform bill for introduction to this House, I should have done violence to my own views with regard to this subject, and should have condescended to the weakness, or it may be to the greater wisdom of the House, if I had proposed to give representation to the University of London. At the same time, seeing that other universities have representatives, I think that is a strong argument in favour of London. Therefore I shall be willing to vote for conferring a representative on the University of London.<sup>2</sup>

Bernal Osborne, another Radical member, went further in his objection to university representation than Bright. “We are already,” he said, “overstocked with university members. I do not see that there is any good in giving members to universi-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, June 17, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

ties"; and, putting his objection in concrete form, Osborne moved an amendment to the clause which would have had the effect of giving to Liverpool the member that it was proposed to give to the universities of London and Durham. Liverpool at this time had a population of half a million and had only two members in the House of Commons.

These objections to the principle of university representation from Bright and Osborne brought Disraeli into the debate in its defence. He advanced a new argument—the third since the reign of James I—for university representation; and from 1868 down to the last serious assault in the House of Commons on this privilege of the universities, by the Plural Voters Bill of 1906, university representation has been based by its defenders on the ground selected by Disraeli. He said:

I am of opinion that it would be well that the university should be represented, because it would give us a constituency of learned and enlightened men. I am in favor of an intellectual element being introduced into this House, purposely and professedly as such. We should not in all cases be merely the representatives of material interests.<sup>1</sup>

As the debate proceeded it came out that a religious test had to be taken before a graduate of Durham could be of Convocation. From Mowbray, who represented the city of Durham, and who throughout the discussion had acted as the spokesman of Durham University, there was a promise that the religious test should be abolished. But this discovery was apparently fatal to the plan of the government to include Durham with London in one university constituency; for on a division on the amendment necessary to make this change in the bill, the government was defeated by eight votes.<sup>2</sup> This was one of the many instances in which the Liberal and Radical opposition ran away with the Reform Bill of 1867, remodelling it in a manner never intended by the Disraeli government when it committed itself to an extension of the parliamentary franchise and set out to "dish the Whigs."

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, June 18, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

With the principle of university representation recognized and extended by the Reform Act of 1867 for England, the extension of the principle to Scotland was taken as a matter of course. The first reading of the Reform Bill for Scotland took place on May 13. Seven members were added to the representation of Scotland. One member was assigned to the universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews and one to those of Glasgow and Aberdeen. In introducing this bill Disraeli said :

These are very learned, ancient and dignified institutions. But it was not until 1858 that they had popular constitutions conferred upon them. Until a measure of that kind was carried, it was quite impossible that the question of the representation of the universities could be considered, because they had no means of establishing a constituency.

The grouping of the universities for parliamentary representation was explained by the lord advocate. "It was thought," he told the House, when the bill was in committee and when it had been settled that there should be two members and not one as originally proposed, "that some jealousy might probably exist between Glasgow and Edinburgh; and it was therefore much better that the interests of each of these universities should be attended to by a separate member." At committee stage the only objection to university representation came from Baxter, a Liberal member from Scotland. There had been nothing to admire, Baxter insisted, in the practical operation of university representation in England and Ireland, and he declared that the extension of the principle was wholly indefensible.<sup>1</sup>

The Reform Acts of 1867 thus increased the number of the university members from six, at which it had stood from 1832, to nine, at which it has since remained. In 1884, when the bill for the extension of the franchise was before Parliament, there was no proposal to bring Durham or any of the newer universities into the representative system. On the contrary, the principle of university representation was seriously challenged. Since then it has twice been assailed in the House of Commons: and in 1906, if the House of Lords had not intervened and re-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* May 23, 1867.

jected the Plural Voters Bill, an end would by this time have been made to university representation. This bill did not indeed propose to deprive the eight privileged universities of their parliamentary franchises, but it would so enormously have reduced their electorates as to have made university representation an absurdity, and disfranchisement must necessarily have followed.

From the early years of the eighteenth century—from the time when political parties came into existence and became grouped, seated and organized in the House of Commons—until the Reform Act of 1867, a Whig or Liberal member was never returned for Oxford or Cambridge. From the union with Ireland in 1801 to 1867 a Whig or Liberal member was never returned from Dublin University; and from 1867 to the last general election in December, 1910, the representative history of these older universities, in its political aspects, has been the same as from 1801 to 1867. All the representatives from these three universities in the eleven Parliaments elected since the second extension of the franchise in 1867 have been of the Conservative party. The universities enfranchised in 1867, however, have not been so persistently Conservative. Lowe, who was elected as a Liberal, represented London University from 1868 to 1880; Lubbock, now Lord Avebury, was elected as a Liberal in 1880 and was of the Liberal party until 1886, when he was again returned for London University as a Liberal Unionist. Playfair, who was a Liberal, represented the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews from 1868 to 1885, when he became a peer; and Moncrieff, who was the first member for Glasgow and Aberdeen, 1868–69, was also elected as a Liberal. During the last forty-two years, in which period there have been eleven general elections, four Liberal representatives have been chosen by the universities enfranchised in 1867; but not a single Liberal has been returned from any of these constituencies since the election in 1886 that followed the rejection of Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill by the House of Commons.

The fact that the universities enfranchised in 1867 have been since 1886 as persistently Conservative as the older universities

of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin undoubtedly accounts to some degree for the present democratic hostility to university representation. But the Conservative attitude of all the university electorates only partially accounts for the likelihood—almost certainty, indeed—that when the veto of the House of Lords on legislation has been modified or abolished, the university electors, like the plural voters with other qualifications, will be completely eliminated from the electoral system by the first bill for simplifying franchise laws and redistributing seats which a Liberal government can carry through Parliament.

III. *The attitude of the Liberal party towards university representation since 1884*

The first organized attack in the House of Commons on university representation was made when the Redistribution of Seats Bill was under consideration; and at that time the House first divided on the principle of university representation. It is significant that this attack, which was led by Mr. James Bryce, was made while the universities of London and of Edinburgh and St. Andrews were still represented by Liberals, and before it could be foreseen that all five universities enfranchised in 1867 would put themselves in line with Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin and become permanent strongholds of the Conservative party.

The main attack was necessarily made on the Redistribution of Seats Bill; but there was some skirmishing on the bill of 1884, the main purpose of which was to give votes to the working classes in the counties who had been left unenfranchised by the Disraeli-Gladstone Act of 1867. Gladstone had not a free hand in 1884. No government, Conservative, Whig or Liberal, ever has had a free hand in framing a measure for the reform of the electoral system. Grey had to confront the Lords in 1831–32. Disraeli had again to confront them in 1867; and Gladstone had to confront them in 1884. Gladstone, like his predecessors, had to frame a bill that would give rise to the least possible opposition in the House of Lords; and in framing the Redistribution Bill which was enacted in 1885, he and his government were obviously hampered by the agreement with the

leaders of the Conservative party in the House of Lords as well as in the House of Commons, entered into in order to end the deadlock which had arisen from the action of the Lords in rejecting the Franchise Bill in July, 1884. These conditions influenced the Gladstone government quite materially in opposing the movement for eliminating the plural voter and putting an end to university representation. The preliminary skirmishing against university representation on the bill of 1884 was remarkable only for one episode—for a speech in which Sir Henry James, the attorney-general, declared that if the question of the universities were raised he did not see how he could defend the existing system. He did not see, he added, how he could defend it any more than he could defend the right of freeholders to plural votes.<sup>1</sup>

The amendment proposed by Mr. Bryce, March 6, 1885, when the Redistribution Bill was in committee, would have eliminated the universities from the representative system. Mr. Bryce did not rest his case on the ground that university representation was an anomaly, for he saw no harm in anomalies if they were practical and useful, but on the ground that the existing system was bad for the universities. It was bad because representation intruded party politics, not only into the universities themselves, but into the academical governing bodies, the Senate at Oxford and Convocation at Cambridge. On this point he said :

This is a serious evil, because it tends to make parties in a university form themselves upon political lines. Thus it prevents persons from forming as fair and as impartial a judgment of educational questions as they otherwise would do, by making them associate themselves with political sections which have nothing to do with education. In some cases the evil was carried so far as to run candidates for academical appointments on purely political grounds, and appointments were made with little reference to the merits of the candidates themselves, but solely from political considerations or to reward political services.

As to the men who were sent to the House of Commons from the university constituencies, Mr. Bryce told the committee that

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, May 26, 1884.

“ they were really not members for the university at all. They knew nothing about the university. They were the members for a large number of persons scattered over the country, and not for the true universities as teaching bodies.” Describing the electorates of Oxford and Cambridge—5382 electors for Oxford and 6458 for Cambridge—Mr. Bryce continued :

The persons who actually voted as the technical and legal constituents of the university were gentlemen who at one time of their lives, between the ages of seventeen or eighteen and twenty-one, had spent three years at Oxford or Cambridge, who might have devoted little or no attention to their studies while there, and who after leaving the university had not in most cases kept up their connection with it, seldom or never visiting it, and knowing little or nothing of what was going on there. Few of them took any interest in it, and if they had any tie, it was a tie with their colleges and not with the university. Nor was it even the fact that all those who had taken their M. A. degree had a vote ; for the right of voting was confined to those who paid a certain sum per annum to keep their names on the college and university books. Thus the university voters were to a great extent men belonging to the wealthier class, and instead of forming a large body of highly educated men they mainly consisted of persons not substantially superior to the rest of the upper and middle classes and by no means of those who had profited most by the university or its studies.

It would be no hardship, Mr. Bryce further contended, to deprive these university electors of the franchise. The majority were country clergymen ; and every non-resident university voter was practically certain to have another vote. As for the university voters who were resident, Mr. Bryce’s suggestion was that these electors should vote in the boroughs in which the universities stood. Finally, he urged that there were no constituencies less independent than the universities, because they were constituencies which had no local life and were at the mercy of the agents and political wire-pullers. “ Talk of caucus dictation,” he said, “ there are no constituencies in the United Kingdom more absolutely at the mercy of an irresponsible and unrepresentative caucus than the University of Oxford—none upon which the Carlton Club could more easily impose a member.”

Up to this point Mr. Bryce had confined himself to Oxford and Cambridge. Turning to the Scottish universities—Glasgow and Aberdeen with 6438 electors, Edinburgh and St. Andrews with 6583 electors—he reminded the committee that their voters had not even been resident and had no tie to bind them together.

The electors were mostly medical men, scattered all over the country, who had not even the college feeling that existed among Oxford and Cambridge graduates, men who never took the slightest interest in their universities except when they received a circular asking them to vote for a particular candidate. They might as well give a man a vote for Brighton because he once happened to spend a year of his life there, as to give a vote to an English or Irish graduate of a Scottish university who had lived in Glasgow or Edinburgh during the period that was occupied in taking his degree.

As for Trinity, Mr. Bryce described that as a constituency which served mainly to provide *ex officio* seats for law officers of the Crown under Conservative governments.

Twelve additional seats were needed for Scotland. Nine of these, Mr. Bryce urged, could be got from the universities. University representation was an experiment which had altogether failed to bring any beneficial result either to the country or to the universities. "The time had now arrived," he added, "when it became desirable to dismiss this device of the Stuart kings to the limbo to which so many other of their devices had been relegated."<sup>1</sup>

Two long sittings of the House in committee, on March 6 and 10, were occupied with the discussion of Mr. Bryce's amendment. There was no defence of university representation from the treasury bench. Sir Charles Dilke, then president of the Local Government Board, was the minister in charge of the Redistribution Bill in the House of Commons. He put forward the case for the government—the case for resisting the amendment—immediately after Mr. Bryce had finished his long speech. At the outset he conceded that Mr. Bryce had made out an unanswerable case against university representation in

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, March 6, 1885.

the abstract. He indicated his expectation that the universities would be disfranchised.

I believe that it is perfectly unlikely that university representation will survive the next Conservative reform bill. Mr. Bryce has given many reasons for objecting to the university vote. But there is one reason which weighs with me more than any other. It applies equally to the freehold voter. I believe it is unwise and undesirable to give double representation in the House because of any special qualification; and it is perfectly clear that university representation is not needed in these days for the purpose of returning men of intelligence.

Sir Charles Dilke then reminded the committee that it was dealing with a bill "which was the result of an arrangement or of general consent between the different parties in the House of Commons" and announced that it was impossible for the government to accept Mr. Bryce's amendment.<sup>1</sup> Later in the debate, when a member recalled the fact that the Bryce amendment would abolish university representation, there was a cheer from Sir William Harcourt. Otherwise members on the treasury bench contented themselves with Dilke's statement; for when Gladstone intervened he was cautiously non-committal. "On the general question," said the premier, "I do not venture to give an opinion, as it is one which, when it is brought forward, will require very mature consideration. I do not venture to convey an intimation as to the course I should myself take."<sup>2</sup>

The most outspoken utterance against university representation was from the Nationalist members, who occupied most of the sitting of the committee on March 10. "They had now," said Mr. Tim Healey, "got these universities in their power." His advice was to "cut their throats." "Kill them now; for if they had another chance it would be giving them a fresh lease of life." The country was entering upon a democratic course. It might be right or it might be wrong, "but," continued Mr. Healey, "let us go on fairly and squarely. If you are going to trust the people, trust them all through and do not fall back upon such a system as this of university representation."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* March 6, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Plunket, Playfair, Lubbock and Gibson—all university members—defended university representation. The ablest defence was from Gibson, of the University of Dublin, who said :

In a Parliament of 670 members, surely it was not too much to ask that its dead level of representation should be broken by the interposition of university members, men whose business it was—in addition to representing what they conceived to be the wants of the whole country—to exercise the special function of considering the claims of education and the requirements of the law, the church and medicine.

The only Conservative leader who intervened was Northcote. "Do you not see," he said, arguing in defence of the existing system, "the importance of preserving some kind of counter balance, however slight, against the power of mere numbers?"

On March 10, at the end of a four hours' discussion, the committee divided on Mr. Bryce's amendment. It was rejected by 260 votes to 79; and no further attack was made on university representation in the House of Commons until 1892, when for the first time there was a proposal to class university voters with plural voters and to dislodge both from the place which for three centuries they have held in the representative system.

In the last session of the Parliament of 1886-92 the Liberals were in opposition. The bill to establish the electoral system on the basis of one man one vote was a private members' measure. It was introduced by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and backed by Sir William Harcourt, Sir George O. Trevelyan, Sir Horace Davey, and Messrs. Stansfeld, Henry Broadhurst and Asquith. It was the most radical bill which up to this time had been submitted to the House of Commons by men who had been members of administrations. Every man whose name was on the back of the bill had held office in Liberal governments, and Harcourt, Trevelyan, Lefevre and Stansfeld had been members of Liberal cabinets. But with a Conservative government in power their undertaking was hopeless. The bill was rejected at second reading by a large majority; and it is noteworthy today only as a part of the history of the movement against university representation and because of the attitude which the Conservative government of 1886-92 took in regard to the

question. "The representation of the universities," said Mr. Goschen, chancellor of the exchequer, in opposing the bill on behalf of the government, "could not survive if this bill were passed, and that means the disfranchisement of a large number of persons. I am against the bill on the ground that it indirectly disfranchises those institutions whose representation I think is valuable to the country." Harcourt replied to the chancellor of the exchequer. "I shall not," he said, "be prevented by fear of manhood suffrage, or fear of what may happen to the universities, from giving a cordial vote in favor of this bill."<sup>1</sup>

Only once has university representation been assailed in a government measure. The Plural Voters Bill of 1906 followed in the main the lines of the Shaw-Lefevre Bill of 1892. It was introduced by Mr. Lewis Harcourt, commissioner of works in the Campbell-Bannerman government, and had it passed the House of Lords it would have prevented any voter—university or otherwise—from exercising the franchise in more than one parliamentary constituency. In asking leave of the House to introduce the bill, Mr. Harcourt said:

We have always been told that the university vote secured the representation of brains, and that it was greatly valued by the intellectuals who were privileged to exercise it. I accept that argument. But the government are leaving in existence the right to vote for the university of every graduate who wishes to make the choice and who has paid the fee which is the principal qualification. Are we to be told that the universities are going to be bled white of voters by the disloyalty of their own alumni? Is it to be contended that the country clergy, who form the bulk of the electorate, are going to prefer the polling booth next to the rectory, where they are only temporary lodgers, to the glory and sentiment associated with their alma mater?

Mr. Balfour, leader of the opposition, objected that the bill would destroy the university seats.

They would be mere wrecks of their historic selves if this bill passes. Those who vote for this bill are consciously or unconsciously, without

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, May 18, 1892.

discussion, without argument, without full public consideration, going to destroy one of the most dignified and most interesting elements in our composite electoral system.<sup>1</sup>

At committee stage there was an amendment from the opposition intended to preserve and safeguard the university vote. It was moved by Mr. Cave, who pleaded for the exemption of the university franchise from the provisions of the bill because "the university vote was the sole trace in our constitution of an educational qualification."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Butcher, who represented the University of Cambridge, conceded that if the country were establishing its electoral system *de novo* there would be no university representation. Sir William Anson, who represented Oxford, agreed that university representation was an anomaly, but pleaded that as the constitution was full of anomalies there was no reason why this one should not continue. "If university representation were abolished, where," he asked, "would be the representatives in the House whose duty it would be to attend to higher educational interests and watch over their progress?" Sir Henry Craik, member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, advanced substantially the same plea. "In Scotland," he said, "the university elector regarded himself as voting specially to represent the interests of education and the higher professions. Many electors voted as people charged with the special duty of guarding the interests of science, literature and education." For London University its representative, Sir Philip Magnus, claimed that it was a most democratic institution. "The right to vote," he said, "could be exercised by every graduate who paid five shillings a year or a commutation fee of one pound. It mattered not whether he was B. A. or M. A., the qualification rested upon education alone." Mr. Balfour's grievance was that the bill would alter the historic constitution of the country by a side wind. "University representation," he declared, "is a part of our system. It works well and smoothly. It produces no hardships. Let it remain." Only 92 members took Mr. Balfour's view, while 347 went into the lobby in favor of the bill.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, May 14, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* October 24, 1906.

In the House of Lords the only debate was at second reading, on an amendment for the rejection of the bill. Lord St. Aldwyn not only defended university representation as it existed but urged that the principle should be extended to the younger universities, Manchester and Leeds, and to the second university in Ireland. He said :

The principle has worked well. It enables the voices of certain classes to be heard in the House of Commons which would hardly be heard but for university representation. The clergy of the Church of England, the different branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the members of the medical profession, all have their views represented, as I think they could only be represented by this system, and university representation should not be abolished.

“ It is disfranchisement carried out in a most insidious manner. I say this particularly on account of the manner in which the bill disfranchises the university constituencies ” was the Marquis of Lansdowne’s brief contribution to the debate; and following this lead the Lords rejected the bill by 143 votes to 43.<sup>1</sup> There for the present ends the parliamentary history of the movement begun in 1884 for the elimination of the university voter.

After the fate that befell this bill for the elimination of all plural voters, it was clearly useless, so long as the power of the House of Lords remained unchecked, for a Liberal government to attempt any reforms which would place the electoral system on a uniform democratic basis. The two general elections of 1910, however, make it now certain that the veto of the Lords will be modified; and the later sessions of the Parliament elected in December last must inevitably be devoted to electoral reforms, on lines similar to those to which the Liberal party has been committed since 1892.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* December 10, 1906.