

Popular Election of U. S. Senators

In 1787 scarcely a state elected its governor and higher officials by popular vote. Now there is no state in the forty-five which elects its governor by the legislature. Why should each of these states continue to elect its two senators by a method it has condemned as to the election of its governor? The interest of consolidated wealth in the election of senators is far greater than it is in the choice of governors, and the corrective of popular choice is therefore more needed.

A little consideration will show that under the present system it is possible for a skillful combination (and money combinations are always skillful) to secure the United States senator in each of the close states if it can obtain control of one-sixteenth of the voters or even less. Let us see. Take a close state which casts 400,000 votes. A majority of the legislature is elected from counties having 200,000 votes, or less when (as is often the case) there is a gerrymander. A majority in the caucus, which controls the party's choice, is therefore chosen from counties having 100,000 votes. But nearly half of these were of the opposite political party, leaving the majority of the caucus chosen by 50,000 voters. These members were nominated in the conventions in their respective counties by a majority only of their party, i. e., by delegates representing say 25,000 voters or less which is one-sixteenth

of the 400,000 voters of the state. The money combinations to whom the choice of senators is all important have money and skillful manipulators. They pick their counties. With free passes to the conventions over railroads and by other methods it is easy to secure the requisite delegates in the county party conventions who represent these 25,000 voters and thus name the nominees who shall, when elected, constitute a majority of the caucus which shall name the senator. The counties belonging to the minority party are neglected by the manipulators, as also are the counties belonging to the majority party which are difficult to handle. The money combination wastes no money. That this is not a fanciful sketch will be recalled by the many instances in diverse states in which the caucus nominee of the money power has received one or two majorities in the caucuses. It is true this great disparity could happen only in close states, but it demonstrates that in any state the election of senators can be controlled by a small but skillful minority under the present system.

There is another objection to the election of the United States senator by the legislature in that the voters of the dominant party residing in counties in which that party is in a minority are utterly without influence or voice in the selection of senator, whereas in the election of senator by popular vote every voter, irrespective of the county of his residence would have an opportunity to express his wishes. In such an election the United States senator must be the expressed choice at the ballot box of more voters than shall cast their ballots for any other man, and his nomination must be made by the majority in the nominating convention of the successful party representing, say one-fourth of the voters, subject to approval by a majority of the whole people at the ballot box. By this method of election a United States senator must be the choice of the state he represents as fully as the governor is. In the present mode of legislative election, the voice of his own party is stifled and unrepresented in all those counties in which, being in the minority, it shall fail to elect the member of the legislature. Then again the voters of the counties electing members to the legislature belonging to the dominant party are also disfranchised if those members do not belong to the majority faction of the caucus.

Another very serious objection to the legislative mode of choosing senators is the frequent "deadlocks" or protracted contests, which take up a large part of the time which should be devoted to the legitimate duty of legislation. The expense to the public is no small item, and the frequent attendant scandals are not edifying, and all this could be avoided by choosing the United States senators the same day and by the same method the members of the lower house of congress are chosen. The selection of members of the legislature often with an eye solely to their preferences for senator and in total disregard of their fitness for legislation or views on public questions or their personal characters frequently leads to serious inconvenience. It is no proper part of a legislator's functions or duties to be an elector for senator and the two duties should not be combined. Members of congress are not constituted electors for president. Yet they might be with as much appropriateness.

The present mode of electing senators does not give any approximate security of selecting the choice of the state as its representative to the hall of federal ambassadors, each of whom should be able to speak for the state

and not as the agent of the corporations doing business therein or a small manipulated fraction of its voters.

The change to election by the people would greatly lessen the chances for corruption. The members of the party convention of the state brought together directly from the people and so soon dispersed again among them are not so subject to the subtle arts of the corporation lobbyists and wire pullers which are brought to bear on the member of the legislature as soon as his nomination is probable (if indeed they do not procure his nomination) and continued till after the election of senator is over when, like a squeezed lemon, he is thrown aside. Besides the party convention is accessible to public opinion, being conscious that its choice, is not wisely made, is liable to rejection at the polls. No such responsibility attaches to the deliberations of a legislative caucus. A mistake there made, or a defiant disregard of public sentiment, is subject to no ratification by the people and is without remedy for six years. There can be a further check upon delegates to state party conventions in that popular choice for senator can be indicated by a primary election.

A senator in office may be tempted to disregard the will of his state if he knows he can by use of public patronage, or other means, secure, as above shown, the control of the one-sixteenth of the voters who compose a majority in the nominating conventions of those counties which send a majority of the legislators of the dominant party. But he will pause, when he knows that his re-nomination must command the approval of a majority of his party convention and that its action in turn must be ratified by a majority—or at least a plurality (if there are more than two parties)—of the votes of the entire state at the ballot box.

The two senators are intended to represent the state. They can not truly do so unless chosen by the whole state. At present as already pointed out large sections of each state are absolutely disfranchised and have no weight whatever in the choice of its senators, because not sending to the legislature members belonging to the dominant party.

The bill to modernize the choice of senators by transferring it from the legislature to the people of each state has passed the lower house of congress several times and once at least by a unanimous vote and once with only two dissenting votes, but the measure has heretofore found its grave in the senate itself, which does not wish to go on record on the question. The legislatures in more than twenty states have instructed in favor of the measure, Oregon, California, Idaho, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, West Virginia and Illinois and there may be others. The constitution of Nebraska requires that the choice of senator shall be submitted to the people at the ballot box the same day members of the legislature are chosen, but this necessarily has only a moral force which would certainly be disregarded if (as is not unusual) the majority of the state on the popular vote should be for one party while the majority elected to the legislature should belong to the opposite party. In many states the United States senator is nominated by the state party conventions and the nominees of that party for the legislature are deemed pledged to vote for him, according to the similar custom now obtaining as to electors for president. There are also many states whose statutes provide for primary elections for United States senator. This expedient is the best possible under the circumstances perhaps and should be resorted to till we amend the constitution by frankly giving to the people of each state the right to choose the

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two men who are to represent their state in the senate. But to be of value the primary should be for the whole state and not merely by counties. If the people are competent to choose the members of the lower house of congress and governors, why are they not competent to name the senators?

The Underground "L."

The running of the train in the subway can be heard distinctly in some of the basements of the buildings along Elm street.

There is a basement barber shop at Elm and Franklin streets. "Big Tom" Foley was dozing in one of the chairs yesterday morning, when a train rumbled beneath. Foley jumped up in a hurry.

"What's that, Henry?" he asked the barber.

"Nuttings," replied the German barber. "Dot is der elevated train in der ground, dot's all."—New York Sun.

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Charcoal effectually clears and improves the complexion, it whitens the teeth and further acts as a natural and eminently safe cathartic.

It absorbs the injurious gases which collect in the stomach and bowels; it disinfects the mouth and throat from poison of catarrh.

All druggists sell charcoal in one form or another, but probably the best charcoal and the most of the money is in Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges; they are composed of the finest powdered Willow charcoal, and other harmless antiseptics in tablet form or rather in the form of large, pleasant tasting lozenges, the charcoal being mixed with honey.

The daily use of these lozenges will soon tell in a much improved condition of the general health, better complexion, sweeter breath and purer blood, and the beauty of it is, that no possible harm can result from their continued use, but on the contrary, great benefit.

A Buffalo physician in speaking of the benefits of charcoal, says: "I advise Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges to all patients suffering from gas in stomach and bowels, and to clear the complexion and purify the breath, mouth and throat; I also believe the liver is greatly benefited by the daily use of them; they cost but twenty-five cents a box at drug stores, and although in some sense a patent preparation, yet I believe I get more and better charcoal in Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges than in any of the ordinary charcoal tablets."