

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION NEAR PURE DEMOCRACY

Means End to All Hack Politicians

Would Hurt Party Government But Afford Direct Representation; Real Statesmen Have No Fears of System.

House of 200-300 Ample

By H. G. WELLS. Author of "The Outline of History." London, May 31.—The politicians of Great Britain under the pressure of various accidental and some fundamental necessities are being forced

towards an honest democracy and efficient government. But they resist with great activity and ingenuity. A bill for what is called proportional representation, but which is really sane voting, has recently been rejected by the house of commons by 238 to 144. It had the official support of the liberal party. Previously, the liberal hacks were against it but they have been chastened by the last two elections. The bill went far towards honest representative government. But when the time comes for its reintroduction it will be necessary to extend it or supplement it by another, reducing the numbers of the representative assembly. The urgencies of the British situation have put Great Britain far in advance of the United States in this matter. There is a respectable movement for proportional representation in the United States, but it has still to be realized as practical politics and a serious need by the American public. In America, every citizen is born either a free republican or a little democrat. It does not matter what the republican or democratic platform

is or what sort of man is put up for him in his division, he has to vote for his party. There is nothing else for him to do. America's Youth Advantage. The United States is young, prosperous and at a great advantage to the rest of the world; it may be able to afford the present travesty of democracy for a long time yet. Britain cannot. The party system has always been more rigidly organized in America than in England. In Britain on the left side, counting liberal, labor and communist together, there are eight or 10 distinct schools of political thought and intention; on the right side there are five or six. The British voter grows more erratic and the results of general elections more silly and incalculable. The idea of proportional representation is now nearly a century old. It is due to a clear-headed man named Hare. He proposed that a number of candidates should stand for the whole country as one constituency. The voter would vote for the man he liked and trusted best. If that man was so widely liked and trusted that he got more votes than is needed to return him, he takes as large a fraction of every vote as he needs and if the voter has indicated a second choice on his paper, the rest of each vote goes to the candidate next on the list. Direct Representation Assured. Whatever happens some or all of the voter's support goes to the man

he has chosen. That man is his man par excellence. There could be no direct relationship between voter and representative. But if that man is a desirable man, the voter may also congratulate himself on the partial possession of a second or even a third, more personal representative. There are people who profess to find great difficulty in understanding proportional representation; mostly this is a purely wilful and subjective fulfillment. The filling up of the voting papers is perfectly simple and the counting and fractionation of the votes offers no difficulty to any properly instructed educated person. Hare System Modified. For trivial reasons Hare's voting method, which would give an almost pure representative democ-

racy, has been modified in all the practical proposals made by the division of the country into large constituencies instead of leaving it one whole, and the assignment of limited but still large number of members to each. But its virtue of comparative veracity in representation still to a large extent remains. Rendall's recent bill proposes constituencies returning not less than three and not more than seven members. This is much too small for a real representation of British opinion but it was as much as the party wirepullers would allow. When the question is reopened this maximum should be increased. The objections to the measure were mostly trivial or based on misconceptions. The question was indeed not discussed. Most of the opponents from the labor side contented themselves with twitting the liberal politicians with change of heart upon the question. Most of the big men in all parties are for proportional representation because they know they are outstanding enough to survive its establishment. Party Hack Doomed. The party hack knows he lives through and by his party; the voter does not choose him but suffers him, and at the first clear opportunity the voter will push him out of the way and choose a more interesting nonparty man. About 70 labor men who have at one time or another professed approval of proportional representation did not vote. The struggle against proportional representation is really the life struggle of the professional party politi-

clan. Under proportional representation the legislative assembly instead of being selected by a small majority or even a minority of the voters in the country will be representative of nearly the whole country. In a constituency electing 10 members, for instance, there will probably be less than a tenth of that constituency not actually represented by members returned. This will fill the assembly, with free members, responsible only to the voters who have returned them and practically independent of organized party support. They will necessarily be various in their opinions. Reduce Size of Bodies. It is not yet sufficiently realized even by the supporters of proportional representation that a country which returns men because they are distinctive and significant to its legislature—and that is what the adoption of proportional representation means—will need an assembly of a different size and type from the present clumsy crowd of notables and nobodies at Westminster. There are too many members of parliament at Westminster for efficiency just as there are too many congressmen at Washington. They loaf about. They do mischief in obscurity. They are to public affairs what excessive fat is to the body of a man. These big legislative bodies date from a time when group psychology was not thought of. It is even possible that a big legislative body elected by proportional representation, would be a worse evil even than the party house. Released from the party ties that

control them, bunched into fluctuating groups, the scores and hundreds of unnecessary members would obstruct and confuse every legislative proposal. Proportional representation must mean not only the suppression of the hack politician but also the suppression of the commonplace member. For efficient government we want a legislature no larger than is fairly representative of the broad varieties of public opinion. At the largest we need only from 200 to 300 members, a grand committee of the nation, appointing ministers severally, assigning tasks to subcommittees and expressing the general ideas of the country. We shall certainly be able to dispense with the rotation of the "ins and outs" and possibly with the organized cabinet in such a legislature. The adoption of proportional representation will be a much profounder and more revolutionary change than a mere change in voting procedure. It will necessitate an entirely new type of representative government. In that lies its importance in the world's affairs and its fascination and desirability for most intelligent people. (Copyright, 1924.)

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ABE MARTIN

On the Circus



A Veteran of Many Continental Tours. Well, th' season for th' sawdust scented, most frequented, circus tented has rolled around agin. Year after year these stupendous aggregations with arenic celebrities gathered from th' capitals of th' world, rare exotic beasts an' birds, an' trained seals, take th' road an' thrill th' same ole countless thousands, an' hundreds n' new babies. But th' circus has its fans jest th' same as theatrical stock companies, burnt cork minstrelsy, an' other time honored institutions, an' their allus downtown early on "show day" 't see th' same ole "magnificent, new free street demonstration—a solid mile of glitterin' oriental splendor rivalin' th'

festive day pageantry of ancient Rome, etc." We haven't missed but one circus in forty years, an' it didn't show. We allus count th' cages, but there's never 50 as advertised, an' we've never yet caught an' Abyssinian wart hog awake an' on its feet. He's allus gone 't th' hay. We learned 't swear watchin' 'em unload a circus. We've seen th' same black Sumatra rhinoceros with th' same circus since he wuz a calf. Th' last time we saw him they'd sawed his horns off so he'd fit th' cage. Ringlin's have th' only circus giraffes. They die so easy that other circuses seem 't git tired buryin' 'em all th' time, so they don't have 'em. We guess Ringlin's is like th' feller that

got married so many times, that said he'd bury 'em as fast as th' good Lord took 'em. Some of the ole flat back ring horses that come around have been in th' business for 40 years, an' th' pearl of th' arena is jest as safe on their backs as she'd be walkin' around Milroy, Indiana. Unlike non-professional horses, they go slower instead of faster when they're whipped. 'Bout th' only difference in circuses is th' number of elephants, which ranges from three 't 30. But they all do th' same things. When an elephant gets tired of th' show business, they shoot him. Th' only new thing we've seen with a circus fer years, we seen last year—a bony zebra. If there's anything in th' world that's found an' plump, it's a zebra. They're easy kept an' git no exercise. Th' ole feller stood in th' cage with his head down an' his eyes half closed jest like an' ole forgotten hack horse in front of a soft drink parlor. We'll bet if he could have talked, he would have asked about George June an' th' ole Gilmore Zoo. Th' same circus had another novelty—th' trained seals wuz brought in th' ring in a wheelbarrow in stead of a push car.

How About a Little Home Art?



Nothing artistic is worth while unless it comes from the other side.

By O. O. McINTYRE. I am beginning to wonder if there is really any art in America. Europe for the last few years has been drawing the red herring across the trail. Nothing artistic is worth while unless it comes from the other side. Certainly we must have a little home talent. The man who brings most of the so-called artistic things to New York is foreign born. He has billions. He says his whole purpose in life is to further and support American art. As one who knows nothing about art I'm growing wary. There is a man who brought the Chauve Souris, Diaghileff's Russian Ballet, Copeau's Theater du Vieux Colombier, Stanislavsky's Moscow Players and lately Max Reinhardt's "Miracle."

He has a mild itch for publicity and I get the idea he is more interested in personal exploitations than art with a capital A. I have seen much worthier efforts than those of the Moscow Players or Chauve Souris expire for lack of funds. European art for some reason or other always has a bankrupt behind it. Why? It is a fair question and I think it is time some of us were seeking the answer. "The Miracle," for instance, is a marvelous spectacle—a stupendous one. Only one with millions could have fostered it despite the whine of the pseudo producer that he was on his last quarter when the play opens. Now it seems to me "The Miracle" is subtle propaganda and in many ways also in my opinion it is dangerous propaganda. So that's that.

Untrue and Unfair. For the last 10 years there has been an increasing fair to bring all the heralded art triumphs from Europe. It has come to the point where only the good actors, good painters, good musicians and the like are foreign born. That is not only untrue, it is unfair. I cannot help but remember of being in Paris when an American singer was roundly hissed for no reason at all. Nor can I forget the boos in a London music hall when an American actor said "dollars" instead of "pounds."

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ment, physically and industrially. If we have been seeking the dollar even in our most materialistic days it was for better country. I have failed to find an Edward H. Harriman in Europe in the past decade. Or a James J. Hill or a lot more I could name. Harriman was not only a great industrial leader he was a poet. He rhymed in rails. Now the big point is this, if Europe wants to send us her art let's welcome it. We don't want to hiss and boo as I have seen it done over there. But let's not grow so hysterical. Let's look around the corner, or next door. The chances are we will find something just as good.

In the past five years America has developed more novelists who have written marvelous pieces of work than the rest of the world combined. I know very little of painting and sculpture but a man who knows tells me that in these two arts America has made more progress in recent years than any other country. So it is up to most of us to cheer a little for ourselves and at the same time we can appreciate what Europe

is doing and give her a cheer now and then. But we ought to save most of our cheers for the home folks. They need it. They have been starving for a few kind words and friendly pats on the back long enough.

AUDUBON CALF CLUB WILL TOUR

Special Dispatch to The Omaha Bee. Audubon, Ia., May 31.—The Audubon county calf club tour will be made next Thursday. A picnic dinner will be held on the E. B. Thomas farm, north of town, at which place a number of calves will be judged by Frank Duvall, official judge of the tour. Another group of calves will be judged on the Willie Esbeck farm in Oakfield township later in the day. The local Lions club is co-operating with the county farm bureau to keep up the interest of the farm boys and girls in club work. There are 34 boys enrolled in the calf club this year.

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