

the majority interest against machine or special interests. It cannot, of course, insure a majority for the winning candidate—no system of voting can do so in any literal sense—but, in case no one running is widely and favorably enough known to command a majority in a free, open expression of choice, it offers a greater likelihood than any other known system that the winner will be of a type loyal to the majority interest, rather than to any machine.

5. It greatly simplifies the supremely important problem of securing high-grade, non-place hunting and competent elective officials. The reasons are suggested in the two preceding sections but this advantage is important enough to warrant separate emphasis.

Of course the easily obtained nomination, freedom from machine control, improved campaign conditions, and good chance for victory for an honest, competent, non-self-seeking candidate, which are features of preferential ballot elections, must be supplemented by holding out to such candidates properly attractive office-holding conditions. This part of the problem has fortunately, however, been pretty well solved in our commission governed cities and the preferential ballot comes in as a most welcome means of filling out a hitherto most troublesome gap in our election methods.

In closing it should be once more emphasized that allowing voters merely a first and a second choice does not in a proper sense constitute preferential voting. Since the purpose of the new system is to offer the easiest and most nearly certain means for the majority sentiment to crystallize behind some one of a large number of nominees for an office, it is obvious that voters must be permitted to vote—in one order or another—for *all the candidates they wish to support*. Only a small minority of the cities mentioned have fallen into the seductive, dangerous and wholly needless error of limiting the allowed number of choices and it is to be hoped that this erroneous practice will not spread.

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PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AT LOS ANGELES

A FEW months ago Los Angeles voted upon a charter amendment providing for proportional representation in the city council. The purpose of the amendment was to secure to the various political elements or groups in the city, the conservative, the moderate, the radical and the independents, that measure of representation in the city council to which the numerical voting strength of the various groups would respectively entitle them.

The merits of the charter amendment, considered as a technical election

law, were not much discussed, but the discussion was largely confined to the broad question of the merits and demerits of proportional representation. Should provision be made that would guarantee to the larger political groups a proportionate representation in the city council, or should the largest group in the city (Los Angeles elects all councilmen at large) continue to have the power to elect all the members of the council? The question of proportional representation was new to the average voter of Los Angeles. It had never received public discussion and consideration here before. The campaign for the charter amendment lasted about two months. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 17,477 ayes to 18,704 noes.

What were the reasons that lead a large city to give such serious consideration to so a novel measure? We will give briefly some of the specific arguments put forth in the support of proportional representation, and some of the political philosophy underlying it.

1. All elements of the city should function in the city's political life. There is more health and safety in lawful action and expression than in inaction and repression.

2. A council elected on the principle of proportional representation would be truly representative, which is what a council should be. Incidentally, government by such a council would make the appeal to the initiative or referendum less frequently necessary.

3. Participation in the city government by all the political elements of the city would build up a wider feeling of loyalty to the city government.

4. Municipal progress and policies would be more consistent and continuous, for at each election a change of position on the part of a few voters would not completely change the character of the city government, but would simply make it a little more conservative or a little more radical than it had theretofore been. Progress, not mere fluctuation, would result.

5. All elements taking part in the city government, all elements would bear some of the burdens of the city government, particularly some of the criticism which is so constant and overwhelming in local government. No reform administration should undertake the impossible task of bearing all the burden of anti-city-government criticisms.

Desisting from the further enumeration of the specific arguments that were advanced by the friends of proportional representation, we will present a little of the general political philosophy underlying the movement.

In a large city with as varied governmental interests as Los Angeles, there are certain to be differences of opinion as to what the municipal policies should be. Honesty and efficiency in administration, the great rallying cries of non-partisanship, are not the only questions that need to be solved. On moral, economic, social, political, educational and sanitary questions, a great city may divide as sharply as does the nation on national issues of the same character. Local political organizations, local political

parties if you like, composed of those who think alike on certain municipal questions, are necessary for the effective development and expression of the political sentiments of a large city.

National parties, organized on national issues, of course should not intrude themselves into city elections. Local political parties should not be of too hard and fast a character, but should come and go and vary in response to the needs of the city for clear expression and definite action. To this end the defeated Los Angeles charter amendment provided the utmost elasticity in the method by which the voters grouped themselves into party groups, and the independents were treated as a group, having all the rights and standing of the more closely organized groups. The voters grouped themselves by the manner of marking the ballots, and a political organization of many years standing would have no legal advantage whatever over a temporary party organized just for one campaign. Experience with non-partisanship shows that it is just as desirable to secure the advantages that come from united action on the part of homogeneous political elements of the city, as it is to avoid the disadvantages of "machine" politics. A "non-partisanship" which means individualism carried to the point of chaos is a thing to be avoided.

Recognition of the importance of policies or measures in city government, and as a corollary, the recognition of the importance of the legislative functions of the city council, carry with them the idea that the council should be distinctly a legislative body, and that the administration of the city government should be in the hands of expert professional administrators under some appropriate adaptation of the general manager form of city government.

A good many of us are getting tired of voting for candidates for city council whose chief qualification for office is that their inoffensiveness gives them a chance of getting a majority vote. We would like a system where the one-fifth or one-seventh or one-ninth of the voters of the city (according to the number of councilmen in the council) who hold similar views to our own, can elect strong positive men to give expression to those views; and then let the other voters express themselves with equal effectiveness. The self-repression and near approach to hypocrisy involved in the effort to get a majority vote, is getting very tiresome, as well as having been shown to be very inefficient. The most difficult of all positions to which to elect strong men is a city council in an election at large. It would not be so difficult under proportional representation.

We have two kinds of anarchists in Los Angeles—a highly reactionary group and a very radical group. The reactionaries have refused to acquiesce in the city's determination to use the initiative, referendum and recall in the transaction of city business, and have sought to block the city government rather than to influence it. The extreme radical group assert that all

government is a failure, and urge the workingmen to ignore it. It is not to the advantage of Los Angeles that either of these groups should grow more numerous—they should be kept at a minimum. Proportional representation will help. If a voter can find even one candidate for the council that he would really like to see elected, a strong candidate with a definite program, the voter is apt to go to the polls and vote. He begins to function in the city government. The paralysis of the “stay at home vote” begins to disappear and health and vigor develop in the municipal life.

GEORGE H. DUNLOP.¹

DEFECTS IN THE DAYTON CHARTER²

AT THE present time when the agitation in favor of the so-called city manager plan of city government is becoming so wide-spread as to attract nearly universal attention, it is well to distinguish between the merits of the plan *per se* and the features of any particular charter that may be cited as putting that plan into effect.

The charter most frequently cited in this connection within the last few months is that of the city of Dayton. Dayton being the largest city in this country that has so far put the plan into actual operation interest is naturally centered on that place, and copies of the Dayton charter are in great demand wherever any interest is shown in the new movement. It is especially desirable therefore that a general indorsement of the city manager plan be not misconstrued into an indorsement of all the features that are found in this charter, which has assumed more or less, through the recommendations of the Dayton bureau of municipal research, the rôle of a model charter for other municipalities desirous of following along the new lines.

It is quite unnecessary here to discuss the merits of the plan for expert city administration of which the city manager movement is properly considered as the chief exponent. On the advantages of expert city administration students are agreed, and it is also true that the city of Dayton has definitely declared itself in favor of the application of the principle, and to that extent deserves the admiration and congratulations of the supporters of efficient city government throughout the country.

But there are some features of the Dayton charter which seem to be undesirable and yet which, unfortunately, would be just as likely to be copied in other city charters as would the commendable ones.

Three of these defects deserve particular mention, one of them in fact

¹ President of the People's Charter Conference of 1913, and a member of the former municipal newspaper commission.

² See article on “The City Manager Plan of Government for Dayton,” by L. D. Upson, NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, vol. ii, p. 639.