

seats to the candidates as indicated by the voters' preferences, reckoning only the preferences of those voters belonging to the party concerned. There need be no "cutting up," or transference of votes, or elimination of candidates, all of which the plain man finds unsatisfying devices. Let us say the Liberals are entitled to five seats, then those five Liberal candidates which have the largest number of votes are elected, the "quota" for this purpose being neglected. Thus, it seems to us, parties would be represented according to the number of their respective adherents, and individuals returned according to the electors' preferences.

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THE HARE-CLARK SYSTEM: COMMENTS BY LIBERAL LEAGUE SECRETARY.

Launceston, 24th January.

The organizing secretary of the Liberal League (Mr. A. T. Marshall) made a few remarks this evening concerning the election. He said, "As far as I am concerned I am well satisfied with the result. Of course, the figures are not entirely conclusive, and if they turn out as it appears they will the decision will be 16 straight-out Liberals and 14 straight-out Labourites. The fact of getting rid of the Wilmot obstructionist is ample justification for the appeal to the country. Naturally one would have welcomed an extra gain to provide for a comfortable working majority, but in view of the sanguine hopes of prominent Labourites that Labour would probably gain a seat in Bass, Denison, and Darwin, we should feel satisfied at the manner in which their prophecy has ended. If our Labour friends are the democrats that they profess to be they should recognize the fact that a majority of the people are in favour of Liberal rule, and instead of putting all their energy into the unsatisfactory work of obstruction should give what ability they have in assisting the work of developing Tasmania."

Mr. Marshall added that he regarded the Darwin figures with a good deal of satisfaction. They had a minority at the last election of 700-odd votes, and this had been reduced by half. When the King Island returns were in he thought the minority would be something less than 200.

Asked if he considered an alteration of the Electoral Act necessary to ensure a working majority for either party, Mr. Marshall said it would be almost impossible for a long time to come for either party to obtain a satisfactory working majority under the present electoral system. It was unsatisfactory, for either one or the other might obtain a large majority of primary votes in an electorate and yet have equal representation. He had long held the opinion that Tasmania would be well advised to adopt the Victorian system or something approaching it, with single-seat contests and preferential voting.

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[From "PASSING NOTES," by "Jacques," in *Mercury* (Hobart), 25th January, 1913.]

Is this the final trial of the Hare-Clark system? That is a question which people are asking all over the State, and I believe that a great majority take the same view as I do—that having been given a very fair trial it must be written down as sadly wanting. I am prepared to stand up on a public platform and to prove to any audience of intelligent people that the theory is absolutely without flaw. Equally, and with much better heart, I am prepared to show that in practice it is as bad as bad can be. It does not give good results to either side, and that ought to be sufficient. It does not represent the opinions of the electors, because in an electorate one party may have a majority of 2,000 votes and yet equal numbers be returned. It destroys party cohesion. It practically compels each candidate to be entirely selfish, and to do everything he can to secure No. 1 votes for himself, even at the expense of his colleagues and his party. And, worst of all, people do not understand what they are doing. If adult suffrage is to be the rule things ought to be so arranged that the ordinary person, even though he may not be highly educated, can know what his vote means. Let us come back to the single-electorate system is my advice, which is worth noting. I am a plain man, and I like to have a ballot-paper containing the names of Smith and Jones only. Then I know that if I put a cross opposite the name of Jones I am voting for him. With the Hare-Clark system I am blessed if one voter out of five knows what the effect of his vote will be.

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THE ELECTION RETURNS.

[*Mercury* (Hobart), 27th January, 1913.]

The counting of the votes under the Hare-Clark system involves so much delay in arriving at a definite result that elections lose much of their dramatic effect. The election was held on Thursday, and the result of the Denison poll was made known on Friday afternoon, that of Bass on Saturday morning, and that of Wilmot on Saturday evening. The results in Darwin and Franklin divisions will not be known until to-morrow. In the first the probabilities favour an equal division, though there may be a change in the personnel of the Labour representation. There is doubt about what is likely to happen in Franklin. Mr. Hean may yet overtake Mr. Ewing, and cross-voting may enable the Liberals to make a bid for a fourth seat. If they do not win it, it will be a close finish.

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HARE SYSTEM AND WOMEN.

[*Daily Post* (Hobart), 27th January, 1913.]

The Hare system of voting is, to the feminine mind, a complex problem. In quite a number of instances at the recent election votes were cast by women, who came to the booth to vote Labour, for Liberal candidates. The preferences provided for in the system puzzled numbers of the fair sex, some of whom, in the Denison Electorate, in sheer despair gave their primary votes to the first name on the paper and wrote the other numerals down to seven in sequence. There were at least fifty women in the Denison Electorate who went to the polling-booth and, though qualified to vote, returned