Officer—which are appended to the paper are those issued by the English Proportional Representation

DUBLIN ILLUSTRATIVE ELECTION.

In this Election Five members are to be elected for a single constituency, such as Dublin might be under a proportional system. The following Nine Candidates have been nominated:

Order of Preference.

Names of Candidates.

	Russell, Rt. Hon. T. W. P.C.			
	Plunkett, Rt. Hon. Sir H., K.C.V.O. Redmond, John E, M.P.			
	Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. K.C., M.P.			
	Devlin, Joseph, M.P.			
\	Dillon, John, M.P.			
	Dockrell, Sir Maurice, J.P.			
	Mooney, John, M.P.			
	O'Brien, Wm., M.P.			

The Single Transferable Vote.

- A. Each elector has one vote, and one vote only.
- B. The elector votes
 - (a) By placing the figure 1 opposite the name of the candidate he likes best.

He is also invited to place

- (b) The figure 2 opposite the name of his second choice.
- (c) The figure 3 opposite the name of his third choice, and so on, numbering as many candidates as he pleases in the order of his preference.

C. A candidate, to ensure election, need not poll a majority, but only a certain proportion of the votes

This proportion, which is the least number of votes sufficient to render certain the election of a candidate, is called the Quota. Thus, in a single-member constituency a candidate who polls one more than half the votes must be elected, the quota is therefore one more than half. So, in a two-member constituency the quota is one more than a third, for not more than two candidates can poll so much; and in a three-member constituency one more than a fourth, and so on. Therefore, to ascertain the quota, divide the total number of the votes by one more than the number of seats to be filled and add one to the result.

- D. The Returning Officer ascertains the result of the election as follows:
- 1. He counts each ballot paper as one vote to the candidate marked 1 thereon; he also counts the total number of votes.
 - 2. He ascertains the quota.

3. He declares elected the candidates who have

received the quota.

4. He transfers in strict proportions the surplus votes of those candidates who have received more than the quota, and credits them to the unelected candidates indicated by the figures 2, 3, and so on, as the next preferences of the electors whose votes are transferred. This operation renders all votes effective; votes are used and not wasted.

He declares elected those candidates who, after the transfer of surplus votes, have obtained the quota.

6. He eliminates the candidates lowest on the poll one after another by transferring their votes in accordance with the wishes of their supporters to indicated the candidates as next preferences. This process is continued until the required number of candidates, having each obtained the quota, have been declared elected, or the number of candidates not eliminated is reduced to the number of seats still vacant, in which event the candidates not eliminated are declared elected.

The above election was conducted with satisfactory results; and in the event Messrs. Devlin, Dillon, Red-

mond, Russell, and Sir Horace Plunkett were elected. It requires a little concentrated attention to follow all the working of the system—especially in respect to the transfer and counting of the votes—but for those who are really interested in the question it is worth the effort. For the average elector, however, such detailed knowledge is no more necessary—as one writer expresses it—than a knowledge of the steam engine is necessary to a railway traveller. The actual voting is simplicity itself. All the voter has to do is to place the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., opposite the names of the candidates as he prefers them-and to suggest that New Zealand electors cannot accomplish this is an insult to their intelligence. The essential and outstanding merit of the system is that it gives minorities a chance; and secures representation according to actual voting power to a greater degree of accuracy than any other known system. It appears, indeed, to closely approach mathematical correctness in securing the proper ratio between the seats actually obtained and the seats which should be obtained in proportion to the actual voting strength of the various parties. Here, for example, are the results of the Belgian elections for 1908—conducted on the List system. The figures for Liberals and Socialists are given together, because in several constituencies these parties presented a common list.

Parties.	Votes Obtained	Seats Actually Obtained.	Seats in Propor'n to Votes.
Catholics	. 515,926	37	36
Liberals and Socialist	s 633,258	43	44
Christian Democrats	. 16,095	1	1

The principle of proportional representation was embodied in the last Tasmanian Electoral Act (1909); and the election which took place in that year was held under the new system. Again the results were almost arithmetically proportionate to the numerical strength of the parties. They were as follow:—

Parties.	Votes Obtained	Seats Actually Obtained	Seats in Proportion to Votes.
Anti-Socialists	 29,286	18	18.3
Labour Party	 18,802	12	11.7

The adoption of the system means, of course, the enlargement of all electoral areas; and, as we have said, its special merit is that it secures effectiveness for the voting power of any considerable minority. In New Zealand, Catholics are exactly one-seventh of the population; and presumably, also, one-seventh of the voting body. On that basis, if there were candidates with just views on the education question, and Catholics were united in supporting them, they should be able with certainty to return ten members out of a House of seventy-six.

Proportional representation, in one form another, is now in force in Denmark, Switzerland, Wurtemburg, Finland, Belgium, and Japan. France is on the point of adopting it; and the Bill which has, after examination by a Committee, been recommended to the Chamber for adoption, has the hearty support of the Catholic Deputies. The idea is making rapid headway in England, and in the British Colonies. Less than two years ago Mr. Asquith declared that unless the career of the present British Parliament was 'tragically by some unforeseen and unforeseeable disaster,' it would 'take another long step in advance on the road of political reform in removing from our electoral system those grave anomalies and abuses which render it now so inadequate and untrustworthy an exponent of the real opinion of the people.' Advocates of the reform are to be found in all the Australian Colonies, and the Chief Electoral Officer of Western Australia has just issued a favorable report. The new South African Constitution provides for the election of the Senate on the new principle, whilst the Transvaal Municipal Act applies it to the elections of the Town Councils of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Ardent advocates are also at work in Canada and the United States. As we have mentioned, the reform was adopted in 1909 in Tasmania, and proved in the

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