

two contestants for the same office. The word "preference" should not be used in connection with presidential primaries. The confusion thus introduced will be thus avoided. There is no need of it any more than in any other primaries.

The true Preferential Ballot, giving the voter the privilege of expressing more than one choice, should be a feature of every presidential primary, as well as of every other primary (the Wisconsin state primary, for example), as well as in every final election in which there are more than two contestants for the same office. See the article on the Preferential Ballot in this issue.

Now let us consider a concrete example, showing the need of the Preferential Ballot in a presidential primary. As we see above, Nebraska has a presidential primary, but not a *preferential* presidential primary. Last spring the democrats of Nebraska chose delegates to the Baltimore convention, expressing their choice for president at the same time, which choice was to be determined by a plurality vote. There were two progressive candidates and one conserva-

tive candidate for president before the Nebraska democratic voters. We at once see that this situation gave the *one* conservative candidate an advantage over the *two* progressive candidates, as there was danger of the massed conservative votes winning over the divided progressive votes, thus robbing the majority of the Nebraska democrats of their real choice. The Preferential Ballot removes this danger, and gives the voters their real choice, without the least injustice to the one conservative candidate. The actual result in Nebraska, if we remember correctly, was somewhat mixed; and there was great anxiety on the part of the progressive voters during the campaign. We urge the extension of the Preferential Ballot to all presidential primaries, as well as to all other primaries, and to all elections in which there are more than two contestants.

During the coming winter there will be great activity in the numerous legislatures which will be in session, along the line of primaries and presidential primaries. The legislation on these matters should be right—should include the Preferential Ballot.

THE PREFERENTIAL BALLOT.

The Preferential Ballot for Insuring Election by a Majority.

If we had our way, very few officials would be elected at the polls by either plurality or majority. For it is only administrative officials that have to be elected by either, and they should not be elected at the polls at all, but should be selected by majority vote of the deliberative body, that is, the legislature of a state or the council of a city.

But, of course, for some time to come many officials will be elected at the polls by either plurality or majority vote. A system of voting, therefore, that insures a majority instead of a

plurality in popular elections is a matter of considerable importance for the present, until all administrative officials are put on the professional basis we advocate for them.

The need of providing for majority elections is evident from the briefest consideration of the recent contest for one of New Jersey's seats in the United States Senate. At the primaries, at which a democratic candidate for senator was to be chosen, three prominent progressive democrats announced themselves as candidates. One day before the expiration of the time in which announcements of candidacies were valid

for printing on the official ballot, a reactionary democrat who had held aloof from the contest until then, announced that he was a candidate also. Here was a situation very dangerous to the progressive cause; if the progressive vote was to be divided among three men and the reactionary vote concentrated on one, the reactionary was likely to get a plurality and win. Under these circumstances two of the progressive democrats had to withdraw from the race in order to concentrate the progressive vote of the party on one man. This meant heart-burning and dissatisfaction, for each of the candidates who was forced to withdraw had no assurance that he was not, in fact, the strongest candidate of the progressive wing of his party.

The whole difficulty would have been avoided by the use of a preferential ballot, such as that in use for the election of the commissioners of Spokane, Washington, or that used in the state primaries of Wisconsin.* The two systems differ somewhat, and neither is theoretically perfect, but either is incomparably better than the plurality system.

The application of the Wisconsin system to the New Jersey contest can be illustrated by the use of figures chosen at random. Suppose that if all four candidates had remained in the field: the reactionary would have polled 55,000 votes; the first progressive, 40,000; the second progressive, 30,000; and the third progressive, 25,000. Under the plurality system the reactionary, having a plurality of the votes, would have won.

But suppose the Wisconsin system had been in use. Then each voter would have been allowed to mark on the bal-

lot his second choice as well as his first. And as no candidate received a majority of the first-choice votes, the provisions of the law in such a case would have been carried out. The law reads that under such circumstances "the name of the one having the least number of first-choice votes shall be dropped, and the second-choice votes cast by the supporters of the dropped candidate shall be added to the first-choice votes of the remaining candidate for whom they were cast."

Suppose the first and second-choice votes cast to be as given in the table below. There the first-choice votes for candidates are indicated by the number opposite names and second-choice votes by the numbers under the names in the second-choice columns. To show how many of any candidate's second-choice votes were on ballots that gave the first choice to any other candidate, the number is put opposite that other candidate's name. Thus, of the 4,500 second-choice votes received by the reactionary, 1,500 were on ballots that gave the first choice to the first progressive, 2,000 on ballots that gave the first choice to the second progressive, etc.

United States Senator.

		Second Choice.			
		React.	1st Prog.	2d Prog.	3d Prog.
Reactionary .	55,000	.....	20,000	20,000	15,000
1st Progressive	40,000	1,500	.....	20,000	18,500
2d Progressive	30,000	2,000	25,000	.....	3,000
3d Progressive	25,000	1,000	20,000	4,000	.....
Totals.....	150,000	4,500	65,000	44,000	36,500

Under the circumstances represented by this table it is evident that under the old plurality system the reactionary would have won, since he received "the highest number of votes cast" on the office; that is, 55,000 votes would have elected him, altho there were 95,000 vot-

*For details of the Wisconsin law, see *EQUITY* for October, 1912, p. 155, §7, where they are printed in full as part of an Arizona act in which they were incorporated without change. Also see article on "The Direct Primary" in this issue.

ers, or a big majority, against him, and he would have owed his election to a divided progressive field.

See now how the second-choice system operates, under which a majority, in this case 75,001, is required to elect. No candidate having received a majority of first-choice votes, we proceed with the second operation according to the provisions of the law quoted above. Dropping the third progressive and transferring the ballots on which he was marked first to candidates marked on them as second choice, we have this result:

Reactionary, 55,000 plus 1,000 equals 56,000.

First progressive, 40,000 plus 20,000 equals 60,000.

Second progressive, 30,000 plus 4,000 equals 34,000.

No one having received a majority, we proceed with the next operation. The law reads, "If no candidate then has a majority, from the remaining candidates the one having the least number of votes then to his credit shall be dropped, and the second choice votes cast by the supporters of said dropped candidate shall be added to the votes of the remaining candidates for whom they were cast."

The second progressive is dropped, and we have the following result:

Reactionary, 56,000 plus 2,000 equals 58,000.

First progressive, 60,000 plus 25,000 equals 85,000.

Result, first progressive is elected.

A little study of the returns will disclose that the reason for the victory of the first progressive lies in the fact that the supporters of the second and third progressives gave their second choice votes to the first progressive. The preferential system permitted them to vote first for the man of their choice and then to mass the progressive field against the common enemy—the reactionary machine candidate—with the result that the progressive voters, who

are in a vast majority, are represented by a progressive senator.

Thus, we see, for "single member districts," or where one candidate is to be elected to an office in the district taking part in the election (which applies to the vast majority of our elections), the preferential system would give the office to the real choice of the voters, and defeat all plans of politicians to divide the vote opposed to them, while concentrating their own. And it is an additional satisfaction for the voter to express more than a single choice, knowing that if his first choice is defeated, perhaps his second or third choice will be victorious.

The Spokane system, which is an improved form of the system well known as that in use for the election of the commissioners of Grand Junction, Colorado, would have obviated the difficulty in New Jersey somewhat differently but equally well.

As the special object of this issue of EQUITY is to explain in an elementary way the several improvements in the mechanism of government for which this periodical stands, we have omitted from this article all technical details. These we hope to give in comprehensive form in an early issue.

Shibley Likes the July Equity.

George H. Shibley, that veteran worker for the Rule of the People, sends in the following word concerning the July issue:

BLISS BUILDING.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 27, 1912.

DEAR DR. TAYLOR:—The current number of EQUITY is received, and I wish to say to you that its clear-cut analyses of the needed elements in a Direct Primary system and in a workable Initiative and Referendum system makes it simply invaluable. You have all the essential facts before you, and you have placed in compact form a statement of just what a citizen should know. Every one who desires to keep posted upon the Direct Primary, the Initiative and Referendum, the Short Ballot, Proportional Representation and the Recall, both for current news and fundamental principles, is obliged to take EQUITY. In no other place can he (or she) consult this data. The low price per year places it within the reach of all.

Sincerely yours,

Geo. H. SHIBLEY,
President People's Rule League of America; Director American Bureau of Political Research.