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PROPOSAL

FOR ESTABLISHING

A CHEAP, JUST, AND EFFICIENT MODE

OF

Electing Members of Parliament,

AND FOR

SECURING THE JUST AND EQUAL

REPRESENTATION OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE.

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LONDON

WATERBLOW AND SONS, PRINTERS, CARPENTERS' HALL, LONDON WALL.

1869.

PROPOSAL, & c.

1. That for the purpose of obtaining an equal representation of the whole people in the Commons House of Parliament, and for preventing as far as possible the undue influence of great and wealthy families, or of individuals who would seek to control the voter in his choice, the United Kingdom be divided into a sufficient number of *Electoral Districts*, each containing as nearly as may be an equal number of inhabitants, and each returning *one representative* to Parliament and no more.

2. That all persons of legal age, sound mind, and untainted by crime, who have occupied any house, lodgings or apartments in a house for three successive calendar months, be eligible to vote for the representative to Parliament for the district they live in, and for no other.

3. That preparatory to every general election the returning officer of the district should cause a printed form to be sent round to every householder in the district, requesting him or her to fill up the same with the names of all persons, of the age of 21 or upwards, who have resided there for three months or more; and from which forms, when returned, he shall cause a list of electors to be made out. That after proper publicity

be given to this list, he should hold open courts of adjudication in his district, for the purpose of hearing and deciding on all objections, and from the list thus revised he should cause a *Voter's Certificate* to be sent round to every person qualified to vote.

4. That to secure members of Parliament possessing high intelligence and good moral character, all persons seeking this high honour of legislating for a nation (or for filling other important offices of State) should be required to *pass an examination*, showing that they possess the requisite knowledge and ability, and should hold a *diploma* to that effect before they should be entitled to offer themselves as candidates, or to take their seats in Parliament, or be appointed to any important office.

5. That the knowledge requisite for members of Parliament (or for the offices referred to) should be clearly set forth in a special Act of the Legislature, and the mode pointed out by which persons seeking such high honour or place of trust, should present themselves before *Public Examiners*, which Government should appoint to meet at stated times and places; and persons who shall prove their ability and fitness before such examiners, according to the provisions of such Act, should obtain a *diploma* to that effect.

6. That every nomination for a member of Parliament should be made by a *written requisition*, delivered to the returning officer, and signed by at least one hundred electors belonging to the district, who, in recommending their candidate, should be required to certify to his

moral character, and also that he holds a diploma of having passed an examination to prove that he possesses the requisite knowledge and ability required by law.

7. That to prevent all undue influence, bribery and corruption in the election of members of Parliament, the votes of the electors should be taken by *Ballot*; the present expensive, unjust, and bribing mode of *canvassing* for members should be abolished by law, and persons punished for having recourse to it; and all Committee or other meetings for the election of members *held at Public Houses* be done away with, as having heretofore been the cause of much undue influence, riot and disorder.

8. That to do away with the present disgraceful and costly mode of electing members of Parliament, which *excludes the representatives of the working classes*, and of all persons, however competent, who have not the means of purchasing their way to power; it should be the duty of Parliament to enact, that a sufficient number of *District Halls*, or commodious buildings be erected in every voting district, to be used as *permanent hustings*, or voting places; the same to contain a sufficient number of committee rooms, and a large hall for public meetings and voting place; the rooms to be used for public meetings, lectures, evening schools, or other district purposes, when not needed for the elections. That all candidates for seats in Parliament should have *the free use* of such halls during the election; such as the use of the large hall, or balcony in front, from which to address the electors in their turn, and the use of the committee rooms

and voting place, so that the only expense needed to be incurred by candidates would be *that of printing their bills and circulars*. The erection and repair of such halls should be paid for by the inhabitants of the district, and be managed by them.

9. That previous to the day of election, the large room in each of the said district halls should be fitted up with moveable fittings, in order to *secure secrecy in voting*, and justice and despatch in receiving and *registering the votes* given for each candidate. The plan of the fittings in such voting place is shown in the model to which this paper is attached.

10. That a sufficient number of *ballot boxes* be provided for each voting place—one for each of the candidates nominated—and formed on a plan for securing secrecy in voting, and at the same time for *registering the votes given*, so that the deputy of the returning officer might be able accurately to announce the state of the poll at the end of the election, without the necessity of any counting of the votes. The model of such a registering ballot box is hereto attached.

11. That the returning officer of the district should be required to *appoint a deputy* to set in front, behind the ballot boxes, at each voting place on the day of election, to see that the voting is conducted orderly and fairly, and to cause all persons to be arrested that attempt to vote unfairly, or seek to promote disturbance. It should also be his duty to show the accredited friends of the candidates the register of the ballot boxes before and after

the voting, and to see that the correct numbers given for each candidate are posted up on the outside of the building, at the end of the election. In order that the friends of the candidates should have the opportunity of seeing that the voting is conducted fairly, they should be provided with seats immediately behind the deputy returning officer.

12. That every elector entering the voting place on the day of election, should be required to show his voter's certificate to the registration clerk at the entrance A ; and if it be found correct, he shall be allowed to pass on and receive from the deputy returning officer's assistant a balloting ball at the entrance B ; when he should enter the balloting place C, and with all despatch drop his ball into the box of his favourite candidate ; the name and colours of the candidate being placed on each box to guide him. After he has thus given his vote he should pass out of the balloting place by the door D. The table before the deputy returning officer should be inclined outwards, and the arrangements within so constructed, that the ball, in whatever box deposited, should roll down the middle of the table in front of the deputy to be ready for the next voter ; and thus, should any elector make use of any other balloting ball than the one given to him, it will roll out and lead to his detection before he leaves the room. The deputy might also be provided with different coloured balls in the drawers of his table, so that he might change the colour whenever he thought proper, and thus more effectually guard against unfair voting.

13. That any person convicted of registering himself in more than one voting district ; of forging or using any forged voter's certificate, or of trying to vote in any other district than his own ; or of going from house to house, or place to place to canvass for the votes of electors, or in any other way contravening the electoral Act, should, for the first offence be subject to one year's imprisonment, and for the second the loss of his electoral rights. Also that any candidate employing persons to canvass for him, or should seek to secure his election by bribery ; or by intimidating or using any undue influence over an elector, or otherwise contravening the Act, shall be subject to one year's imprisonment and the loss of his seat for the first offence, and for the second, the loss of his electoral rights, and to be for ever after disqualified from having a seat in Parliament.

14. That in order to obtain properly qualified persons as Legislators ; men disposed to devote their sole time and attention to their parliamentary duties ; instead, as at present, often dividing their time between their private business and their parliamentary duties ; or in regarding the honour of their seats as passports to fashionable society ; members of Parliament should *be paid for their services* by a writ on the Treasury, the same as any other officers of State.