

**MINORITY OR PROPORTIONAL
REPRESENTATION: ITS NATURE,
AIMS, HISTORY, PROCESSES,
AND PRACTICAL OPERATION**

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Minority or Proportional Representation: Its Nature, Aims, History, Processes, and Practical Operation by Salem Dutcher

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SALEM DUTCHER

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MINORITY
OR
Proportional Representation.

ITS NATURE, AIMS, HISTORY, PROCESSES,

AND

PRACTICAL OPERATION.

BY
SALEM DUTCHER.

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PREFACE.

UNDER our existing electoral system, if there are, say, seven Representatives to be elected in a constituency of seven thousand voters, four thousand of whom belong to the A party, and three thousand to the B; the A voters will secure all seven Representatives, and the B voters have none. Equity demands, that as the voters stand as four is to three, the Representatives should stand in the same proportion, and to secure this equitable division is the main aim of Minority or Proportional Representation. The idea is, simply, that every party shall be represented in proportion to its strength. If it has half the vote it should have half the representation; if a third, a third; and so on. The origin and nature of the processes proposed for the accomplishment of this object, and the general history of Minority Representation, form the subject of this book. The purpose of the work is neither to criticise nor advocate, neither to decry Minority Representation on the one hand, nor on the other to hold

it up as the one thing needful to cure all the ills to which the body politic is heir, but simply to present, in a convenient form, the best information, foreign and domestic, upon a subject which has already occupied the attention of the British Parliament, the Danish Rigsraad, the Swiss Council, and the Congress and many of the Legislatures and State Conventions of the United States, and is daily rising into general interest and importance.

SALEM DUTCHER.

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MINORITY

OR

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

CHAPTER I

DEFECTS OF THE PRESENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM—THE NON-REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES—UNFAIR APPORTIONMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTERS—THE CRUSHING OUT OF ALL BUT TWO GREAT PARTIES—THE BALANCE OF POWER VOTE—EXCLUSION OF ABLE MEN FROM PUBLIC LIFE.

THE propriety of giving every party in the body politic a representation in the law-making body proportionate to its popular strength, has of late years attracted considerable attention. The idea is by no means a new one, and indeed it lies at the foundation of popular government that the representative body should be the constituent body in miniature; but in practice the principle has been much neglected. It is the exception rather than the rule for the law-making to be a correct portraiture of the popular body; and perhaps the annals of representative government might be searched in vain for such a legislature as that described by Mirabeau in his famous speech before the Constituent Assembly on the 30th of January, 1789, as "being to the nation what a chart is for the physical configuration of its soil, presenting a reduced picture of the people, their opinions, aspirations, and wishes, and bearing the relative proportion to the original precisely as a map brings before us mountains and dales, rivers and lakes, forests and plains, cities and towns." The occasion of this failure is to be found in the inadequacy of the means