

HENRY HAZLITT

INSTEAD
OF
DICTATORSHIP

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ALL over the world democracy as we have come to know it seems to be either in desuetude or in disrepute. Even in the United States, while all the outward forms of democracy have been retained, Congress since the beginning of the Roosevelt Administration has acted as a mere rubber stamp for the President. Germany has joined the growing group of nations ruled by outright dictators. The world has been losing its faith in the virtues of parliamentary discussion and criticism. There are two chief popular complaints against such discussion: first, that you cannot "get things done" under it; and second, that the things you do get done are the wrong things. Fascism and communism, the two alternatives to which the world has been turning, have, like all polar antitheses, one point of identity: both are dictatorships, with the difference that fascism is dictatorship in the interests of the plutocracy and that communism is dictatorship in the interests of the proletariat. Neither has any respect for the ballot or majority opinion. Both say to us, in effect: "We are not going to give you the kind of government you want, but the kind that we consider is jolly well good for you. And if you begin to get critical or troublesome, it's your funeral." On this point Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin shake hands.

I am still an adherent of democracy, but not because I believe that the main criticisms of it—that it is inefficient, dilatory, and unintelligent—can be dismissed. We must follow the majority, as Pascal remarked (long before the American

or French revolutions), not because they have more reason, but because they have more power. Or, as Walter Lippmann has put it, the real justification for majority rule lies in the fact that it is the mildest form in which the force of numbers can be exercised: "It is the pacific substitute for civil war in which the opposing armies are counted and the victory is awarded to the larger before any blood is shed." This is a way of saying not only that democracy is the most stable form of modern government, but that, in the long run, it is likely to be the least unjust and the least unintelligent. For only a government securely resting on majority consent, however often the personnel of that majority may shift, can afford to allow free criticism; and when criticism is free, public, and continuous the decisions of those in power are most likely to be well considered. The dictatorships we at present know in Germany, Italy and Russia not only suppress free criticism in fact; they *must* do so to survive in their present form.

This, however, is still not an answer to the chief criticisms of democracy. Democracy *is* inefficient, but I cannot agree with those who feel that inefficiency is inseparable from democracy, or even that it is the essence of democracy. What is chiefly wrong with democracy is its cumbersome organization, an organization that is not essential to it, but the result of historical accident and stupid traditionalism.

The truth of this can be seen most graphically if we try to imagine this particular type of organization and machinery in a field in which we are not accustomed to it—for being accustomed to any practice or institution tends to deaden any critical attitude. Let us, therefore, imagine our

modern political organization applied, say, to a great industrial corporation. Instead of having one board of directors, the corporation would have two, so that one would have power to reject the decisions of the other, and so that nothing whatever would be done if the two boards could not agree. Instead of having either of these boards compact enough for decisions to be made in a reasonable time, the corporation would have one board consisting of 96 members and the other of 435. Except in extraordinary circumstances, any one of these members—on at least one of the boards—would be permitted to speak during meetings for hours on end, and not necessarily on the business before the meeting. It would be considered not merely bad manners but the height of tyranny for the chairman of the board to ask any member taking up the time of all the others to cut his remarks short. The president of the company would not be permitted to take part in the discussions of either of these boards of directors. But though it would be considered shockingly improper for him to take part in the discussion while it was going on, and quite proper and even vaguely laudable for him to leave the two boards during the whole discussion completely in the dark regarding his own views, he would be permitted to reject completely any decision made by them when it finally came before him. Indeed, complete rejection or complete acceptance would be his only alternative; to return the decision with suggestions that it be slightly modified on this point or that would be almost unheard of. To compensate for this, the boards of directors would not be able to bring the president before them and question him regarding his policy, nor would they be per-

mitted to question the various vice-presidents or departmental managers appointed by him with their consent. Would the stockholders consider all this preposterous? On the contrary, they would congratulate themselves that the ability of one board to reject the decisions of the other, and the ability of the president to reject the decisions of both, and the ability of the boards to refuse to carry out any policy desired by the president—in brief, the ability of almost anybody to prevent anybody else from getting anything done—was the strongest point in the management of the company.

Far from being an unfair description of the government of the United States, this picture does not tell half the story. Few persons can sit for long in the gallery of the Senate or the House without being overcome by a feeling close to hopelessness. One comes, perhaps, naïvely expecting to hear what are called the problems of the country discussed, and discussed from the standpoint of the general welfare. One finds, instead, that nearly one-third of the time seems to be given over purely to the discussion and resolution of technical points of parliamentary procedure—whether Congressman 432 can be recognized by the chair; whether Senator 94 may rise to a point of order; whether or not there is a quorum present. Of the time remaining, about two-thirds is given over to the discussion of various trivialities, chiefly having to do with purely local interests. For it is local, and not national interests, with which the average Congressman is chiefly concerned. And why shouldn't he be? It is the voters of Middletown, not the voters of the United States, who elected him, and it is the voters of Middletown, not the voters of the United States, who can throw him out. Nor

can one naïvely suppose that the scramble for competitive local interests will somehow insure the national interest. That supposition is no more valid in political science than it is in economics.

The Treasury may be facing a dangerous deficit, but it is still to the interest of the Congressman from Middletown to demand a new post office for Middletown, and for the Congressman from Zenith to demand a widening of the river at Zenith, and for the Congressman from Zenith to vote for the Congressman from Middletown's post office, and the latter for the Congressman from Zenith's river, and so on around the circle, than for either to vote against the demand of the other. The same procedure notoriously applies to tariff bills in which the home industries of each district are "protected" at the expense of American consumers everywhere. It is partly because of its vague recognition of these endless log-rolling and petty pork-barrel tactics, I think, that popular sentiment nearly always tends to support the president as against Congress in any quarrel between the two.

Having seen what it would be like to have a great railroad or industrial company run with the preposterous organization of our national government, let us try to imagine our national government run with the comparatively simple organization of a great industrial company. Instead of a Congress made up of two houses and more than 500 members, there would be a board of directors or council of, say, just 12 men. None of them would represent any particular district; all of them would be elected from the country as a whole.

The first objection likely to be made to such a proposal is that it is merely fantastic, and entirely out of the realm of what is called, with singular irony, "practical" politics. But though we are the most conservative people in the world when it comes to altering our sacrosanct form of government, and though it is true that from the standpoint of the machinery alone it would require at least a new constitutional convention to put into effect the kind of simplified government I have just indicated, we should not forget that such a government would be incomparably less dangerous and experimental, and incomparably easier to achieve, than the sweeping communist revolution so glibly discussed in bourgeois intellectual circles. Let us, therefore, look at it as if it really did represent a reform that could be achieved in the not altogether remote future. Would it be desirable?

Perhaps the first argument against it, from this standpoint, is that so small a body could not possibly be "democratic," could not represent the diverse interests of the country. I do not believe there is much weight in such an objection; it will occur chiefly because we have grown *accustomed* to huge, unmanageable bodies. The unwieldy bicameral legislature sprang up in England purely through historical accident; yet when we signed our so-called Declaration of Independence, and set up a government of our own, we slavishly imitated the British bicameral system, and so did virtually all of our States, and nearly every democratic European and South American government established since then. Of course, as always when an old institution is retained, the retention was rationalized, and we developed our well-known theories of "checks and balances."

In so far as there otherwise would be any real danger in a small body, it can be easily obviated by a change in our method of voting. The members of such a body should be elected by proportional representation, and preferably by what is called the single-transferable vote, or Hare system. There is not space to describe this system of voting in detail here, but to those not already familiar with it I ought to say that it is not my private invention, but is already in use to some extent in parts of Europe and even in a few American cities. Those who wish to read a thorough discussion of it may consult the admirable book by C. G. Hoag and G. H. Hallett, Jr., "Proportional Representation" (Macmillan). It is enough to say here that proportional representation is a method of electing representative bodies which gives every group of like-minded voters the same share of the members elected that it has of the votes cast. Wholly apart from the small legislative body here proposed, such voting could be applied on a limited scale even to Congress as at present constituted. It insures both majority rule and minority representation. It would do this in the case of the small council here proposed by allowing each voter to name his first, second, third, and as many other choices as he pleased. His ballot would be counted for his first choice if it could help elect him. If it could not help elect him, it would be transferred to the highest of his other choices that it could help. Even from the standpoint of mere mechanics this method has the great advantage of rendering entirely needless not merely direct primaries but the expensive travesty our national parties have to go through every four years in their nominating conventions.

What would be the result of selecting the members of a small national council by this method of voting? First, it would insure that practically every man elected to the council was a man of genuinely national eminence. Such a man would represent the interests not of any locality but of the country as a whole. A man like Senator Borah, for example, would undoubtedly be elected to the council, and his chances of election would depend not, as now, on retaining the votes of 51 per cent or more of the electorate of Idaho, but on retaining one-twelfth or more of the votes of the electorate of the entire country. This means that he would be free in all his decisions to disregard the special interests of Idaho and all questions of petty patronage, and to devote himself singly to the interests of the country as a whole. He could afford to stand for measures that were "unpopular" in the sense that he would not depend upon a majority vote within any limited geographical area, but merely upon making himself the first choice of one-twelfth or more of all the voters (or of capturing enough second and third choices, and so forth, to make up any deficiency). Each of the other candidates would be in a similar position. The result would be not only a very great improvement in the average stature of the men selected over those selected at present, but a great increase in their sincerity. The individual candidate could afford to alienate special groups and would no longer feel under the necessity to please everybody.

A second result of a small legislative body, so chosen, is that a higher type of man would enter national politics. It is no great distinction, nor does it give a man very much sense of power and influence, to be one of a body of 435 mem-

bers, or even one of a body of 96. (He would be considered a well-informed citizen indeed who could name off-hand more than a half-dozen members of the present House of Representatives, not to speak of the Congressman from his own district.) But it would be a very real distinction to be one of a body of 12 and to know that one's vote on an important measure would be one-twelfth of all the votes cast. Further, in so small a legislative body the capacity to keep in office would not depend to the extent that it now does almost everywhere on mere oratorical or rabble-rousing powers. One can make a spread-eagle speech to a body of 400 or even 100 members, but it would sound merely ridiculous before a body of 12. The result would be to oblige the members of the council to talk most of the time in those relatively practical and concrete terms that even the average Congressman now uses in committee rooms.

A third result, of the highest importance, is that proportional representation with the single transferable vote would insure the representation of minorities who are not represented under the present method of voting for a single member from each of more than 400 districts. Even as between the two major parties there is no fairness of representation. For example, in 14 Southern States in the elections of 1930 the Democrats elected 107 Congressmen, the Republicans 3. Under proportional representation, with each State as one district, the same division of popular votes between the parties would have elected 80 Democrats and 30 Republicans. In Pennsylvania, on the other hand—to take but one instance of a Northern State—33 Republicans and 3 Democrats were elected, whereas representation in proportion to

the popular votes of the parties would have elected 26 Republicans and 10 Democrats.

The much graver evil of the present system, however, is the practical exclusion of small minority parties. The Socialist party, for example, has never been fairly represented in any American legislature in proportion to the actual votes cast for it. In the 1930 Congressional elections it elected no one; but to reflect the actual popular vote it would have elected at least three members. And, of course, if to vote for a Socialist were to become more than a futile gesture, it is probable that many more persons would vote for Socialists. The effect of our present method of voting is clearly to discourage the launching or growth of any third party, and to perpetuate the now almost meaningless division—chiefly one of geography and not of principles—between the Democratic and Republican parties, and to prevent any realignment of the major parties on significant issues. The effect on minority groups, like the Socialists or Communists, of our present method of voting, is either political apathy or deep resentment. Much of the talk of “revolution” we are now hearing, and the derision of “reform through the ballot,” is a reflection of this resentment, this feeling that minority opinion cannot achieve influence or even expression in the legislative body.

John Stuart Mill thought proportional representation with the single transferable vote “the greatest improvement of which the system of representative government is susceptible,” and I stress it here, not as a minor refinement, but as the only type of voting that would be certain to remove the dangers that might otherwise inhere in the legislative body

of only a dozen members that I am proposing. Proportional voting would insure the representation of any minority party constituting one-twelfth or more of the entire electorate, if the members of that party merely had the sense to concentrate their first choice on one man.

Because a small body of 12 members would concentrate power and make prompter decisions than are now possible, it is not to be supposed that it would represent a sort of "fascist" government. Fascism, as we have defined it, is a dictatorship in the interests of the plutocracy. Now the proposed council would not be a dictatorship, because it would never represent one party exclusively unless more than eleven-twelfths of the voters voted for that party. On the contrary, the council would reflect minority opinion to an extent that our present Congress does not begin to reflect it. Of course, if a majority of the members elected to the council were conservatives, then we should have a conservative government. But under the same system we could also have a radical or a communist government.

It is interesting to speculate upon the probable membership of such a council if the plan were to be put into immediate effect. Here we enter the realm of pure guesswork; but let us put aside our personal preferences and say that our council, in the order of its selection, might be something like this:

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Herbert Hoover

Alfred E. Smith

William E. Borah

Ogden Mills
Newton D. Baker
Albert C. Ritchie
Huey Long
John N. Garner
Nicholas Murray Butler
Norman Thomas
Hiram Johnson
George Norris

To avoid misunderstanding, let me say at once that there are a number of men on this hypothetical council that I personally should not like to see there. I should certainly regret the presence of Huey Long. But no proposal for a genuinely democratic government can be truly realistic if it does not recognize that power and office will sometimes be secured by demagogues. All that any democratic plan can hope to do is to reduce this possibility to a minimum. Huey Long is already elected to the Senate. Not only is the possibility of his being elected to the proposed council of 12 much smaller than that of his being elected to a Senate of 96, but it seems to me that he could also do less damage if he got there. For on a council with the membership I have indicated, or any similar membership, he would have no followers. His filibusters would be much less menacing. It is a serious matter for a man to talk for hours on end when there are 95 other men who may want to talk on the same subject. From the standpoint of the loss of time involved, it is much less serious—in fact, only about one-eighth as serious—when there are only 11 other men who could

possibly talk on it. On such a council each man could express his views freely and fully; but the filibusterer, the mere obstructionist, would have to work his tongue off.

If anyone doesn't like the membership of this hypothetical council as a whole, I advise him to read the names in the latest Congressional Directory to refresh his memory. He may then take every forty-fourth name, beginning wherever he likes, and see whether the resulting list is more satisfactory than the one I have indicated. (Only he must not pick out simply the dozen men he most likes; I could play that game myself, and my council would be much different!) Whatever one may think of any individual in the hypothetical group I have listed, there can not be the slightest question that the average stature of its members far exceeds that of the present members of Congress, and that it would, on the whole, arrive at far more intelligent decisions. And no one can suppose, certainly, that a body consisting of such powerful and influential men could ever be used as a mere rubber stamp for any president.

The method of choosing the president, and the relations of this council to the president so selected, remain to be discussed. Here it is necessary for us to make a crucial decision. We must choose between the presidential form of government, which is best exemplified at present in the United States, and the parliamentary form, of which the archetype is the government of Great Britain. It is my opinion that except in certain extraordinary circumstances the parliamentary form is much the superior: it is significant that it has been the one adopted by practically every democratic government in Europe. But there is no reason why we can-

not have a flexible form of government which may be presidential when exceptional circumstances arise.¹ For example, if any one candidate for the council were to receive more than half of all the first choices set down by the voters, he could be declared elected to the presidency. As such a candidate would be preferred by the voters to all the other candidates combined, he ought not to be removable by the council; and he should at least have the power of the veto (to be over-ridden only by a two-thirds majority) that the American president enjoys now. But in a total field of, let us say, 40 or 50 candidates for the council, it is extremely unlikely that any one candidate would receive a majority of all the first choices named; that would hardly happen in one election in ten. In the ordinary election, it would be desirable to follow a much different method of choosing the president.

The president, in the ordinary case, though he might have that title, would have more nearly the functions and status of the British prime minister. As the British prime minister is the creature of parliament, so the American president would be the creature of the council. He should be one of the 13 men elected to the council. (The careful reader will have noticed that my hypothetical council contained 13 names and not 12. The reason for this will now appear.)

¹ In outlining more briefly a plan in its broad outlines similar to this one in *Scribner's Magazine* for July, 1932, under the title of "Without Benefit of Congress," I proposed a form of government which in effect attempted a compromise between the parliamentary and the presidential. I have since decided that such a hybrid form would work too uncertainly and satisfy no one. This is something different from the present proposal, that the form of government may be *either* presidential *or* purely parliamentary for any two-year period as the popular vote itself dictates.

It is desirable from every point of view that the president shall have been one of the elected councillors. The president should be a man capable of capturing the popular imagination; he should be a man who, like the other members of the council, has won his position through the dust and heat of a political campaign. If no one of the 13 members is elected by an absolute majority of first choices, then the 13 members of the new council, as soon as the result of the election is known, should ballot among themselves for the presidency.

The result could be determined by a majority preferential ballot. Each member of the council would vote for his first, second, and third choices, and so on. If any member of the council received a majority of all the first choices, he would be declared president. If no one received an absolute majority, then second, third, and later choices would be counted. The result could be determined either by the gradual elimination of the lowest candidates (adding the second choices on those ballots to the votes for the other candidates), or still more accurately by the Nanson or the Hallett system² of counting such ballots. The candidate chosen by this method for president would then be the man whose leadership the other members of the council found most desirable—or at worst least objectionable.

Some readers may wonder why so complicated a method of voting is considered necessary. Where any single party is in an absolute majority, and concentrates on one candidate, that candidate would of course be elected by a majority of first choices, in which case we should have "responsible party government" of the type usually found in Great Britain.

² Cf. Hoag and Hallett's "Proportional Representation."

But if there were several parties represented, none of them with a majority, a majority preferential ballot would be by far the best device for assuring the election of the most satisfactory compromise president. Such a device would, moreover, make a deadlock impossible, particularly if no member's ballot were counted as valid unless he indicated every choice up to his twelfth.

It would seem advisable for the term of the council to be about the same as the present Congressional term—two years. In any longer period the legislative body is likely to get too far out of touch with the mood of the electorate. The longest single term of any president would also be two years, corresponding with the life of the council. There are only two real arguments against frequent elections: the expense they involve, and the uncertainty they sometimes cause among business men and others. As we already have Congressional elections every two years, neither of these drawbacks, to the extent that it needs to be taken into account, would be any greater than it is now. Few other arguments in favor of infrequent elections are worth considering. The conservative notion that frequent elections make the government too subject to popular passions and whims, and encourage demagoguery in politicians, is without substance even from a conservative point of view: the incumbent president and legislators may themselves owe their positions to popular passions and whims already regretted by the voters, in which case only a new election could make the voters' sober second thought effective. While a new election, in other words, may bring a certain number of demagogues into power, it is just as likely to throw an equal number out. In Great

Britain, where an election may be held at any time, demagoguery is surely not more rampant than it is here.

With the proposed council, of course, there would not be the absurd separation between the president and the legislative body that exists under our present constitution. That separation is calculated to bring about constant friction if not deadlock. A Democratic president like Wilson may be forced to deal with a Republican Congress, a Republican president like Hoover with a Democratic Congress. Under such conditions a president cannot deal authoritatively with foreign countries; he is half paralyzed in his negotiations with them. In domestic questions the legislature may refuse to pass the measures desired by the president and the president may veto the measures of the legislature. It is impossible under such a system to fix real responsibility upon either the legislature or the executive. It is impossible, for the same reasons, to determine party responsibility.

But the suggested council (except in the rare case of the president elected by popular majority) would have the final authority which always reposes in the legislative body under a parliamentary system; the president and the council could not be long at loggerheads, because the president would be the council's creature—elected by it and removable by it. It could vote a lack of confidence in him at any time, remove him by simple majority vote and elect a new president by the majority preferential system, with the former president taking his place as a member of the council and presumably as a critic of the new president.

The president, like the British prime minister, should have the right to take part in the debates in the legislative

body, and he should, in turn, again like the British prime minister, be obliged to answer questions regarding his policy. He should have the right to vote on all measures or amendments to them. In a parliamentary government of this sort he should not, of course, have the right of veto as we at present understand it; but if he objected to a bill, he could state his objections after the council had passed it, and after these objections were stated it would be necessary for the council to pass the bill again, though it need do so only by a majority vote (including the president's), and not by a two-thirds vote. The president, in other words, would have just one vote like any member of the council, and his objection to any measure would be influential only in so far as it influenced public opinion or caused some members of the council themselves to change their vote. The president's cabinet could be chosen by him, as now, subject to the ratification of the council. Cabinet members could have the right to participate in debates on bills involving their departments; they should also be obliged to answer questions regarding their departments. Not being elected officials, they should not be given any vote in the council.

It need hardly be said that under this system there would be no vice-president. The vice-presidency is a wholly unnecessary as well as a potentially dangerous institution; the office is nearly always occupied by men who would not be seriously considered for the presidency. Nor is it necessary, in my opinion, to have the equivalent of the king, as in England, or of a president in addition to the premier, as in France or Germany, to enable the parliamentary system to function. There is no reason why the presidency and the

premiership cannot be combined in one office. The European kings and presidents seem to me obstacles to the sound functioning of parliamentarism rather than aids. Thus Ramsay MacDonald has been kept in power in England beyond his time through the influence of King George; and in Germany Bruening was thrown out of power and Von Papen, Von Schleicher, and Hitler thrown in successively, not because of changes in popular sentiment but because of the vagaries of the aged Hindenburg. The premier-president, under the system here proposed, is selected by the legislative council, as he should be. If he resigns or dies, the council can immediately, by the same preferential majority voting method, elect his successor. If the council is not in session, the Secretary of State can assume acting powers during the few weeks before the council meets and elects the new president.

A word more may be said here concerning the possibility of a president elected by popular majority vote. It may be thought that the criticisms I have made of our existing presidential system would apply against the occasional presidential system suggested under the plan here proposed. But apart from the fact that such a system would occur very rarely under this plan, and only when any single candidate had received more than one-half of the votes cast for all the candidates, it would differ from our existing presidential system in two very important respects. The president would be a member of the council, participating in its discussions and debates, and proposing bills like any other member; and in addition to receiving a veto power, he would be given an equivalent power to vote affirmatively. For example, if he vetoed a measure passed by a 7 to 5, or mere majority vote

(not including his own), it would have to be re-passed by an 8 to 4, or two-thirds vote, to become law. This means that, actually, his negative vote would be equivalent to 3 votes by other members of the council. It is only logical, therefore, that he should be given the equivalent of 3 votes to cast *in favor* of measures. Thus a measure that might otherwise be lost by a 5 to 7 vote could be passed by his casting his 3 votes for it. This would be far more rational than our present veto system, which, by permitting the president a merely negative vote, simply weights the scales against anything positive being done. There is nothing politically unprecedented about the proposal to give the executive more than one affirmative vote; in the present government of New York City, for example, the Mayor casts 3 votes in the Board of Estimate.

The practical objection might be raised that a small body of 12 members could not possibly get through all the work that Congress now gets through. I believe this to be the opposite of the truth. There could be, for example, far more effective discussion of measures than there now is, and in incomparably less time. There is not much point in allowing each of 531 men a voice when 400 or 500 of them are all going to say substantially the same thing. To prevent this, Congress has often to adopt arbitrary closure rules. But with a legislature of 12 men, closure would never be necessary.

It will be said, no doubt, that the real work of Congress is done in committees. Such work, however, could be better done by our proposed council appointing outside committees. Let us take, for example, questions of banking and currency. At present these are turned over to standing com-

mittees in each house, and these committees, for political reasons, consist of about 20 members each—far larger than they need to be for effective consideration of banking and currency legislation. Now it is true that by dint of remaining for years on one of these committees, a member of the House or Senate gradually comes to acquire some specialized knowledge of banking and currency problems. But it may be questioned whether he ever acquires enough. Probably the only member of either the House or Senate banking committees whose knowledge of such problems commands respect from bankers and economists at present is Senator Glass, and he has the advantage of once having been Secretary of the Treasury. It would be far better for an elected council of 12 to turn such problems over to a small appointed standing or special committee of, say, 5 or 7 trained monetary and banking economists and ask them to draft legislation. The final decision, of course, would be made by a vote of the council, though the members of the committee should be permitted to participate in the debates.

And so with agriculture, education, taxation, military and naval affairs, patents, labor, tariff policy, and every other legislative problem requiring expert knowledge. New committee members, of course, might be picked by each new council, but in practice there could be great length and security of tenure for such members. As now, an arrangement could be worked out by which the membership of the committee corresponded in its party representation to the relative strength of the parties in the council. Under proportional representation there are few violent overturns of party strength in the legislature such as there are under the

present single member district system. A committee consisting of four Democrats and three Republicans might then become one of three Democrats and four Republicans, which would mean the change of only one man. The funds to support these committees would come from the substantial savings in the salary appropriation for the legislative body itself. At present it costs \$4,513,500 a year to give 531 Congressmen \$8,500 a year each, not counting the pay of secretaries. We could pay each of the 12 councilmen \$40,000 a year each—the salary of New York's mayor—and still have a legislative salary bill less than 10 per cent of the present one. We could get the various experts at the present salaries, say, of members of the Federal Reserve Board.

No doubt as a practical matter there would be violent objection to the plan here outlined on the ground that it disposes of the Senate. The Senate, it will be said, is an essential part of the federal system itself; the senators are "ambassadors of the States," and necessary for the protection of States' rights. I do not believe there is much rational ground for this objection. So far as protecting States' rights is concerned, it would be very difficult to prove historically that the Senate has ever helped in this particular in the slightest. The real protection has come from the language of the Constitution itself and from its interpretation by the Supreme Court; and the Constitution and court could both exist under the plan here proposed. States' rights, further, are likely to be better preserved by a council of 12 men elected nationally and thinking nationally, than by a Congress of more than 500 men elected locally and thinking locally. For when more than 500 men are nearly all de-

voting a large part of their time to securing special local benefits from the federal government, there will gradually but surely, in return, accrue to the federal government compensating rights and powers. Twelve men are much more likely to mind their own federal business, and leave local communities to mind theirs.

Undoubtedly, however, there are a large number of persons who fear the concentration of power in a council of 12 men. I have already indicated that with proportional representation these fears seem to me unwarranted, yet if concern for States' rights, together with such misgivings, made a compromise inevitable, we might with little damage to the present proposal retain a senate of somewhat revised constitution and powers: (1) It should consist of only one man from each State, reducing its membership from 96 to 48. (2) It would seem advisable for several reasons to have each senator appointed by the governor of his State with the ratification of the legislature, to be changed whenever the governor and legislature of that State changed; thus assuring that the senator really spoke as an "ambassador of the State" and not merely as an individual. (Incidentally, a body of senators so chosen could exercise the additional function—impossible to the Senate as constituted at present—of securing collaboration among the States, and between the States and the federal government, looking toward more uniform State corporation, banking, divorce, labor, traffic and other laws, agreement on the respective fields of federal and State taxation, and the like.) (3) In order to reduce mere obstruction and delay, it might be provided that every bill passed by the council must be acted upon by

the senate within six months, otherwise it would become law if re-passed by the council. (4) It might be provided that the senate could not defeat a bill passed by the council unless its No was at least as emphatic as the council's Yes. For example, a measure passed by a mere majority of the council might be defeated by a mere majority of the senate, but a measure passed by two-thirds of the council could be defeated only by a two-thirds vote of the senate. (So far as I know, this principle has never been adopted in a bicameral legislature; yet without it a minority of the whole legislature can constantly defeat the will of the representative majority.)

The whole plan of government here outlined could hardly be realized, as I have already indicated, without a constitutional convention, which under the present constitution cannot be called except on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the States. There are two chief reasons why it could not be adopted by the usual method of a new amendment proposed by Congress and ratified by State legislatures or conventions. (1) The change is too sweeping and has too many ramifications to be included in a single amendment, unless that amendment were, in effect, a new constitution. (2) The reform calls for the reduction of Congress from a body of 531 men to a body of 12, or at most, if a revised Senate is retained, of 60; and it would be naïve to suppose that more than a handful of Congressmen could be brought to vote for a change that threatened to throw from 88 to 98 per cent of them out of power and jobs. What seems advisable, if popular demand is to be created for a new constitution embodying such a reform,

is a series of minor campaigns for the adoption of that reform first in the cities and then in the States. The city-manager plan, already in existence in some cities, resembles it closely, though the city-manager is not himself an elected official, as I think he should be. City councils elected by proportional representation can, of course, be much smaller than 12. It need hardly be added that in cities or States there is no excuse whatever for a bicameral legislature. When the council plan has been dramatized by actual adoption in a few States the way will be open for it nationally.

A final word may be said about the widespread feeling at present among economic radicals, particularly among many who have been influenced by the communists, that changes in political technique or institutions are unimportant; that political reform, in short, is futile unless it is preceded by drastic economic reform. It seems to me that the truth is just the opposite: genuine economic reform is impossible without political reform. This, indeed, is really the official position of the communists themselves, though by political reform they mean solely violent revolution. I believe that violent revolution in this country, with our complex and highly integrated industrial and financial organization, would be a catastrophe. But even after that catastrophe had occurred, the problem of political organization would return. Dictatorship, as we find it in Russia, is a result, not a solution. Wholly apart from the suppression of all fundamental criticism, and the cruelty to all the elements of the population that do not share or pretend to share the views and interests of the rulers, the rulers themselves must ultimately tend to use their excessive power, resting not on

consent but on force, in their own interests. "All power corrupts," as Lord Acton has reminded us; "and absolute power corrupts absolutely." But if we are to have a peaceful and gradual growth in the direction of broader social control, if the government is to take an increasing part in the ownership and direction of industry, then it becomes increasingly necessary that its decisions be much prompter than they are now and much more intelligent. And it seems to me that only a compact integrated government of the type here outlined, constantly resting on majority consent, can assure this.

My hope, as I think I have made plain enough, is not to move toward dictatorship, but away from it. A large Congress, contrary to the belief of superficial minds, leads much more easily to dictatorship than a small one. This truth has been illustrated vividly enough since the beginning of the Roosevelt regime. It is generally recognized that it is intolerable, and particularly so in a time of crisis, to allow every one of 435 men to talk himself out on every measure. That is why, in practice, the individual Senator has enjoyed so much greater freedom of criticism and deliberation than the individual Representative. That is why, also, in a crisis like the banking collapse of March, 1933, a Presidential bill can be rushed through in seven hours with practically no discussion or consideration by the individual members at all; and why a complete legislative program involving the most far-reaching changes in our economic life can be railroaded into enactment, with hardly much more discussion, in the course of a few weeks. Procrastination leads to a crisis that must be met with a panicky haste.

I hardly expect the reader to agree with me on every detail of the proposal here outlined. I have gone into these details, indeed, chiefly because consideration of them may help us to clarify our ideas and keep them in the realm of practicality. But regardless of questions of detail, we must recognize the need for devising and instituting a genuinely simple, efficient and intelligent democratic government if we wish to save ourselves from that weakness and vacillation in times of crisis that have been leading in one country after another to the forcible seizure and ruthless abuse of executive power.