

This bill differs from nearly all that have been proposed in certain important features and from all in their combination.

In the first place it is universal. It proposes that the government of the United States shall take entire control of the registration of voters, the determination of their qualifications, the counting of the voters, the making the returns and the certification of the results. This is accomplished by a Commissioner of Elections to be appointed in each judicial district of the United States by the Judge of the District court thereof, to hold office during good behavior, and removable by the judge for malfeasance. The Commissioner appoints a Registrar of voters in each precinct who holds during good behavior and is removable by the Commissioner for malfeasance. The Registrar recommends the four other members of the Election Board of which he is chairman. Any one appointed and failing or refusing to serve on such board is liable to fine for such failure.

The tickets are to be printed and distributed under the direction of the Commissioner and none except official ballots are allowed to be used. Candidates or their friends must pay a certain sum per 1,000 voters for their service which is applied to the expenses of election. The tickets are printed like a railroad ticket containing one ballot for each candidate. Two of the Election Board are ticket-distributors and it is arranged that they are a check upon each other. The unvoted parts of the ticket must go into one box, the voters ballot into another. The utmost ~~prize~~ care is exer-

cised to secure the illiterate voter from error or compulsion and to prevent any one from ascertaining the nature of the elector's vote.

The returns are made to the Commissioner of Elections, who compile the same and report to the District Judge who certifies the results to the Clerk of the House. The Judge is also given power to prescribe rules and regulations fitted to the need of his district for carrying the law into effect having the power to punish their infraction as a contempt. This is in brief the machinery which is universal, applying to every State and every district. It adopts the Australian method of voting in effect, only modifying it to secure greater simplicity, to harmonize with the rest of the bill, to render false returns more difficult and to preserve more effectually proof of fraud.

Aside from these it has three or four distinctive and important features. It provides among other things, that a State shall not deprive a citizen of the United States of the right to vote at such elections, after he has once become a voter, by adding any new or onerous conditions to the exercise of that right. This is not only ~~improper~~ appropriate but necessary legislation in enforcement of the XIVth and XVth Amendments, preventing the recently very clearly developed tendency towards disfranchisement at the South.

It provides also, that no one shall be allowed to vote for members of the House of Representatives who is not a citizen of the United States. The question may seem a small one, but it is really a very great one. In thirteen states persons who are not citizens of the United States, are now allowed to participate in its government. It is high time we prevented unnaturalized foreigners from exercising power in the National government.

As a result of regulating the election of Congressmen by Federal Statute, uniform in all States and all districts, all crimes against the ballot, against the freedom of the voter, all interference with free speech on the part of the candidate or free assemblage on the part of the voters, becomes cognizable in the Federal Courts. The bill provides therefore, that any threat or intimidation of the voter whether direct or indirect, individual or collective, shall be punishable in the United States courts. That any one who shall interfere with a candidate in his canvass; disturb any public meeting called in whole or in part to discuss the availability of any candidate; shall be guilty of riot at the polls or shall sell or give ~~any~~ any voter any intoxicating liquor on the day of election shall be liable to indictment in a Federal court. It makes beating, wounding or interference with an officer of election while in the performance of his duty, a matter of national rather than state jurisdiction, and ousts the state jurisdiction so far as to give priority to Federal control, ^{but} not making a judgment in ⁱⁿ either ^{forum} a bar to prosecution ^{by} the other, -- the federal court simply pun-

ishing for violation of its authority in the person of its official and the State being left to punish the breach of the peace.

A very unique provision is that which allows individuals excluded ^{or deterred} from voting to hold ^a meeting, which is likewise under the provision of Federal law, to make sworn and immediate protest against the wrong.

The objection to the class of bills which make a special Federal election law to apply to a particular district in a State and not to others--or to particular states and not to others,--is both constitutional and practical. It is doubtful if the Congress has any right to make unequal laws of that sort or has the right to ~~make~~ impose on the citizens of any district, or a part of them, the right, duty, privilege or peril of determining whether the State or Federal law shall control the election. ^{for members of Congress in the same} But even if constitutional, it would in many cases be eminently dangerous for citizens to assume such responsibility. The duty of government is not to make it extra-hazardous for a citizen to do his duty, but to make the exercise of his rights, as easy, safe and certain as they ^{it} can possibly be rendered.