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**THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH**



THE  
AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH

BY

JAMES BRYCE

AUTHOR OF "THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE"  
M.P. FOR ABERDEEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

THE PARTY SYSTEM — PUBLIC OPINION — ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND REFLECTIONS — SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

THIRD EDITION  
COMPLETELY REVISED THROUGHOUT  
WITH ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS

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## **APPENDIX**

## NOTE TO CHAPTER LXI

### EXPLANATION (BY MR. G. BRADFORD) OF THE NOMINATING MACHINERY AND ITS PROCEDURE IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS <sup>1</sup>

1. *Ward and City Committees.*—The city is divided into wards by act of the city council prescribed by the legislature (number of wards in the city of Boston, twenty-five). Each ward in its primary meetings appoints a ward committee of not less than three persons for the party: that is, the Republican primary appoints a Republican, and the Democratic primary a Democratic committee with varying number of members. This committee attends to the details of elections, such as printing and distributing notices and posters, canvassing voters, collecting and disbursing money, etc. The ward primaries nominate candidates for the common council of the city (consisting of seventy-two members), who are elected in and must be residents of the ward. The several ward committees constitute the city committee, which is thus a large body (practically a convention), and represents all the wards. The city committee chooses from its members a president, secretary, and treasurer, and each ward committee chooses one of its members as a member of a general executive committee, one for a general finance committee, and one for a general printing committee. The city committee formerly, acting as a convention, nominated the party candidates for the elective offices, which are now the mayor, the aldermen (twelve chosen by districts),<sup>2</sup> the members of the school committee, and the street commissioners. The Democratic city committee does this still; but much dissatisfaction was caused among the Republicans by the fact that wards which had but very few Republican voters had an equal share of power in the city committee, and therefore in making nominations. (It will be seen that in organizing the national convention a similar difficulty has been encountered.) The Republican city committee has therefore ceased to make nominations, but calls upon the wards to send delegates, in proportion to their Republican vote, to a general convention for the nomination of candidates. The party lines are, however, very loosely drawn, especially in cities outside of Boston, and anybody may nominate candidates with chance of success proportional to his efforts.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright by Gamaliel Bradford, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> By an Act of the State Government of 1893, accepted by the voters of Boston, the twelve aldermen are elected at large or on general ticket, instead of by districts, no voter to vote for more than seven aldermen on one ballot, and the twelve having the highest number of votes to be declared elected.

In the towns as apart from the cities, the people, in primary of each party, elect a town committee which corresponds to the ward committees of the city. The town and city committees call the primaries which elect their successors; and thus the system is kept alive. The city committee may by vote modify the structure, mode of election and functions, both of itself and of the ward committees, but in the town this power lies with the caucus or primary. The above account applies to the city of Boston, but the principles are substantially the same throughout the cities of Massachusetts, the main difference being in thoroughness of organization.

2. *County.*—The county is much less important in New England than in any other part of the country. There are to be chosen, however, county commissioners (three in number, one retiring each year, having charge of roads, jails, houses of correction, registry of deeds, and, in part, of the courts), county treasurer, registrar of deeds, registrar of probate, and sheriff. These candidates are nominated by party conventions of the county, called by a committee elected by the last county convention. The delegates are selected by ward and town primaries at the same time with other delegates.

3. *State.*—First as to representatives to State legislature, 240 in number. The State is districted as nearly as may be in proportion to population. If a ward of a city, or a single town, is entitled to a representative, the party candidate is nominated in the primary, and must be by the Constitution (of the State) a resident in the district. If two or more towns, or two or more wards send a representative in common, the candidate is nominated in cities by a joint caucus of the wards interested called by the ward and city committee, and in the towns by a convention called by a committee elected by the previous convention. The tendency in such cases is that each of these towns or wards shall have the privilege of making nomination in turn of one of its residents.

As regards senators the State is divided into forty districts. The district convention to nominate candidates is called by a committee elected by the preceding convention, and consists of delegates elected by ward and town primaries at the same time with those for State, county, and councillor conventions. Each senatorial district convention elects one member of the State central committee, and, among the Democrats, fifteen members at large are added to this central committee by the last preceding State convention.

The convention for nominating members of the governor's council (eight in number) also appoints a committee to call the next convention.

The State convention consists of delegates from ward and town primaries in proportion to their party votes at last elections, and is summoned by the State central committee, consisting of forty members, elected in October by senatorial convention, and taking office on 1st January. The State committee organizes by choice of chairman, secretary, treasurer, and executive committee, who oversee the whole State campaign. The State convention nominates the party candidates for governor,

lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, attorney-general.

4. *National*.—First, representatives to Congress. Massachusetts is now (1892) entitled to thirteen, and is divided into thirteen districts. The convention in each district to nominate party candidates is called every two years by a committee elected by the last convention. The delegates from wards and primaries are elected at the same time with the other delegates. As United States senators are chosen by the State legislatures, no nominating convention is needed, though it has been suggested that the nominations might with advantage be made in the State convention, and be morally binding on the party in the legislature. Next are to be chosen, every four years, delegates to the National convention,—that is, under present party customs, two for each senator and representative of the State in Congress. For Massachusetts, therefore, at the present time, thirty. The delegates corresponding to the representative districts are nominated by a convention in each district, called in the spring by the same committee which calls the congressional representative nominating convention in the autumn. The delegates corresponding to senators are chosen at a general convention in the spring, called by the State central committee from wards and primaries, as always; and the thirty delegates at the meeting of the National convention choose the State members of the National committee.

The National convention for nominating party candidates for President, called by a National committee, elected one member by the delegates of each State at the last National convention. The National convention (and this is true in general of all conventions) may make rules for its own procedure and election—as, for example, that all State delegates shall be chosen at large instead of by districts. At the National conventions, especially of the Republicans, complaint has been frequently made, as in the case of city committees, that parts of the country in which there are very few members of the party have yet an undue share of representation in the conventions; but no successful plan has yet been devised for overcoming the difficulty. The National committee manage the party campaign, sending money and speakers to the weaker States, issue documents, collect subscriptions, and dispense general advice.

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#### NOTES TO CHAPTER XC

Some further notion of the character of the Constitution of 1879 may be obtained by referring to the extracts from it, printed at the end of Volume I.

Among the improvements which it introduced may be noted the lengthening of the term of judges of the supreme court from ten to twelve years; the prohibition of lotteries; the perpetual exclusion from the suf-

frage of all persons convicted of any infamous crime, or of the embezzlement or misappropriation of public money; and the placing the State university above the reach of the legislature, which can now neither terminate its existence nor modify its organization. This change has not been found to make the legislature less willing to aid the university. In 1887 an Act was passed imposing a tax of one cent upon every \$100 of taxable property, to be applied for the support of the University of California. Nor has the provision (Art. ix. § 6) that the revenue derived from the State school fund and State school tax should be "devoted exclusively to the support of primary and grammar schools," been found to work badly for secondary education, since it has rather induced the cities to make a more liberal provision than they formerly did for schools of the higher type out of local taxation.

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REMARKS BY MR. DENIS KEARNEY ON "KEARNEYISM IN CALIFORNIA"

After the appearance of the first edition of this book I received a letter from Mr. Denis Kearney, making remarks on some of the statements contained in the chapter entitled "Kearneyism in California." This letter is unfortunately too long to be inserted as a whole; and it does not seem to me seriously to affect the tenor of the statements contained in that chapter, which my Californian informants, on whom I can rely, declare to be quite correct. Mr. Kearney's version of what happened varies from that which I have followed. I have, however, in a few passages slightly modified the text of the former edition; and I give here such extracts from Mr. Kearney's letter as seem sufficient to let his view of his own conduct be fairly and fully set forth. As he responded to my invitation to state his case, made in reply to a letter of remonstrance from him, I am anxious that all the justice I can do him should be done.

Pages 431. — "In September, 1877, immediately after the general State, municipal, and congressional elections, I called a meeting of working men and others to discuss publicly the propriety of permanently organizing for the purpose of holding the politicians up to the pledges made to the people before election. . . . I made up my mind that if our civilization — California civilization — was to continue, Chinese immigration must be stopped, and I saw in the people the power to enforce that 'must.' Hence the meeting. This meeting resolved itself into a permanent organization, and 'resolved' in favour of a 'red-hot' agitation. I was, in spite of my earnest protests, elected President of this new organization, with instructions from the meeting to 'push the organization' throughout the city and State without delay. Our aim was to press Congress to take action against the Chinese at its next sitting. . . . I did not sympathize with the July meeting of 1877, which was called to express

sympathy with the men on strike in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. I am opposed to strikes in a Republic, where the ballot of a millionaire's gardener or coachman cancels that of their master. . . . The part that I took in the municipal election, mentioned in page 391 [now 431], was brought about in this way. I owned a prosperous draying business, and was an influential member of the Draymen's Union. The streets of our city were in a horrible condition, almost impassable, making it very difficult for teams to haul any kind of a load to and from the distributing centre. The money appropriated for their repair by the taxpayers was squandered by the men elected to see that it was honestly spent. The Draymen's Union, for self-protection, went into municipal politics and demanded that we be given the superintendence of streets."

Page 432. — "True I am not one of the literati, that is to say, a professor of degrees and master of languages, although I can speak more than one. For more than thirty years I have been a great reader and close student of men and measures. No *Chronicle* reporter ever wrote or dressed up a speech for me. They did the reverse; always made it a point to garble and misrepresent. It was only when the *Chronicle* saw where it could make a hit that it spread out a speech. To illustrate, if I attacked a monopoly whose rottenness the *Chronicle* shielded for money, it then would garble and misrepresent that speech; but if I attacked an institution the *Chronicle* wanted to blackmail, the speech would be given in full once or twice, or they would keep it up until 'seen.'"

Page 432. — (Meeting on Nob Hill.)

"I did not use any such language as is imputed to me. Nob Hill is the centre of the Sixth Ward, and I advertised for the meeting there to organize the Sixth Ward Club. We had bonfires at all our meetings so as to direct the people where to go. . . . No such construction could have been put upon the language used in my speech of that evening. The police authorities had shorthand reporters specially detailed to take down my speeches verbatim. . . . I was not arrested on account of the Nob Hill meeting. I cannot now tell without looking up the matter how many times I was arrested. At last the authorities, finding their efforts to break up the movement of no avail, decided to proclaim the meetings *à la* Balfour in Ireland. Upon the heels of the proclamation to stop our meetings came another from the Governor calling for an election to fill a vacancy in the legislature in the aristocratic district of Alameda. Taking advantage of the situation, I went into the district, organized and carried it against a combination of both Democrats and Republicans. This gave us a standing in the field of politics, and frightened the authorities, who then and there withdrew opposition to the new movement."

Page 435. — "Shortly after the election of the delegates I made a tour of the United States, speaking everywhere to immense audiences and urging that they petition Congress to stop Chinese immigration. . . . My trip was a brilliant success. In less than a year I had succeeded in lifting the Chinese from a local to a great national question. This also disputes the statement that my trip East was a failure."

Page 441. — ("Since 1880 he has played no part in Californian politics.")

"This is true to this extent. I stopped agitating after having shown the people their immense power, and how it could be used. The Chinese question was also in a fair way of being solved. The plains of this State were strewn with the festering carcasses of public robbers. I was poor, with a helpless family, and I went to work to provide for their comfort. Common sense would suggest that if I sought office, or the emoluments of office, I could easily have formed combinations to be elected either governor of my State or United States senator."

Page 435 ("hoodlums and other ragamuffins who formed the first Sand Lot meetings.")

"It was only when the city authorities, who while persecuting us, either hired all of the halls or frightened their owners or lessees into not allowing us to hire them, that we were driven to the Sand Lots. At these early meetings we sometimes had to raise from \$500 to \$1000 to carry on the agitation inside and outside the courts. If, then, the audiences were composed of hoodlums and ragamuffins, how could we have raised so much money at a single meeting?"

Page 440. — "I also dispute some of the statements therein. All of the bills of the first session of the Legislature under the new Constitution were declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court on account of the little scheming jokers tucked away in them. The Anti-Chinese Bills that were passed, — and all introduced were passed, — were declared by the Federal judges as in conflict with the United States Constitution. I advocated the adoption of the new Constitution, and delivered one hundred and thirty speeches in that campaign. The San Francisco papers sent correspondents with me. The very prominence of the questions threw me into the *foreground*, so that I had to stand the brunt of the battle, and came very near being assassinated for my pains."

Page 443. — "I don't quite understand what you mean by the 'solid classes.' The money-lenders, land monopolists, and those who were growing rich by importing and employing Chinese labourers were against me, and did all in their power to kill both the movement and myself. . . . My only crime seems to have been that I opposed the Mongolization of my State in the interest of our own people and their civilization. I never received a dollar from public office or private parties for my services. They were gratuitous, and have secured me, I am sure, the esteem of the majority of my fellow-citizens, among whom I am still not without influence."

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