

The object of the system of proportional representation is to give each party (or each group of persons with definite aims or opinions, if there are no parties in the usual sense of the term) representation in proportion to its numbers. It is interesting to note how far the purpose of the system was attained in the election of the Christchurch City Councillors. The strength of the parties is assumed to be given by the aggregate of the first-preference votes recorded for the candidates on the respective party "tickets," the independent candidates (though probably of different shades of opinion) being grouped together for the purpose of this estimate. (See Table B).

TABLE B.—NUMBER OF VOTES AND NUMBER OF SEATS GAINED BY EACH PARTY.

	Number of Candidates.	Number of Votes.	Number of Seats gained.	Number of Seats in Proportion to Votes.
Citizens' Association .. ..	12	9,791	9	9.4
Labour .. ..	12	4,792	5	4.6
Independents (various) .. ..	6	2,094	2	2.0
Totals .. ..	30	16,677	16	16.0

In other words, each party or group of electors obtained the integral number of members nearest to the number to which it was entitled by its votes.

TABLE C.—THE WEIGHT OF THE VARIOUS PREFERENCES IN DETERMINING THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION.

By counting the votes of all the elected candidates it was found that of the total votes on which they were elected the several preferences were in the following proportions (for comparison the corresponding figures for the Tasmanian General Election, 1909, are given):—

	Christchurch City Council, 1917 (16 Members elected).	Christchurch Hospital Board, 1917 (7 Members elected).	Tasmanian General Election, 1909 (6 Members elected in each Constituency).
First preference .. ..	0.7649	0.8790	0.739
Second preference .. ..	0.0977	0.0458	0.140
Third preference .. ..	0.0517	0.0292	0.051
Fourth preference .. ..	0.0269	0.0127	0.029
Fifth preference .. ..	0.0195	0.0254	0.014
Sixth preference .. ..	0.0107	0.0055	0.008
Seventh preference .. ..	0.0073	0.0016	0.009
Eighth preference .. ..	0.0053	0.0002	0.008
Ninth preference .. ..	0.0036	0.0008	0.003
Tenth preference .. ..	0.0034	Nil	Nil
Eleventh preference .. ..	0.0032	"	"
Twelfth preference .. ..	0.0036	"	"
Thirteenth preference .. ..	0.0011	"	"
Fourteenth preference .. ..	0.0008	"	"
Fifteenth preference .. ..	0.0002	"	"
Sixteenth preference, &c... ..	Nil	"	"
	0.9999	1.0002	1.001

Or we may exhibit the facts thus:—

TABLE D.—WEIGHTS OF GROUPS OF PREFERENCES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES' VOTES.

	City Council.	Hospital Board.	Tasmania.
First, second, and third preferences ..	91.44	95.39	93.0
Fourth, fifth, and sixth preferences ..	5.72	4.36	5.1
Seventh, eighth, and ninth preferences ..	1.62	0.25	2.0
Tenth, eleventh, and twelfth preferences	1.02	Nil	Nil
Thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth preferences .. ..	0.21	"	"
	100.01	100.00	100.1

In other words, in the three elections the first six preferences accounted for 97.16 per cent., 99.75 per cent., and 98.1 per cent., respectively, of the total votes obtained by the successful candidates.

## INFORMAL VOTES.

The number of informal votes was somewhat large: in the City Council election out of 17,476 voting-papers 799, or 4.57 per cent., were informal, and the proportion in the other two issues was even greater, the average percentage of informal votes in these three issues being 5.60. The choice of the electors in the mayoral election was marked by a cross opposite the name of the candidate preferred by the elector, and formerly the candidates for councillorship for whom an elector did not