## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

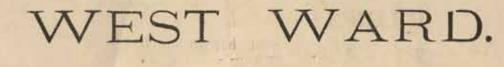
On 15 January 1919 political theory became practice when the citizens of Sligo town went to the polls and wrote a new chapter in political history becoming the first electorate in Ireland or Britain to vote under the proportional representation (P.R.) system.



## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, 1919.

Under the Sligo Corporation Act, 1918, you have an opportunity of reshaping the destinies of our Ancient and Historic Borough.

On the 15th JANUARY NEXT you will be called upon to elect twentyfour members to represent you in the Council Chamber, and, as nominees of the Sligo Ratepayers' Association-an Association composed of Sligo men (and women) of every class and creed-we solicit your vote and interest in the



We do not come before you with any fanciful and farfetched programme, impossible of fulfilment, but, as plain businessmen, we appeal to your sound common sense and ask you to place in our hands the power to carry out the reforms so strikingly necessary in Sligo :---

1-To reduce the Rates.

- 2-To secure adequate value for public money expended in the Borough of Sligo.
- 3-To promote to the utmost of our power the Commercial prosperity of the Town and Harbour, thus giving to our large labour community the prospect of constantly increasing employment so necessary to its welfare.
- 5-To improve the dwelling accomm the poor and the worker, and the elimination of all insanitary houses.

We believe all this can be accomplished, and we shall cordially co operate with the representatives of Labour in any scheme which may be found feasible for the uplifting and betterment of the labouring classes.

Owing to the many claims on our time, we may be unable to call, as we should like to, personally upon each Voter, but, remember, we each have a stake in Sligo Town. We sympathise with its sorrows, we are proud with its prosperity. All we ask is that you extend to us your confidence, and we can faithfully promise that nothing shall be left undone to lighten the heavy burdens which have weighed us down of late years, strangling Industries at their birth, and chasing from our neighbourhood the capital so essential if Sligo is to flourish.

With the dawn of Peace, a new Era is opening the world over, WHY NOT IN SLIGO ? The future is in YOUR hands, the responsibility rests with YOU. We are willing to do OUR part in the work of regenerating our Town.

WILL YOU HELP?

JAMES CONNOLLY. JOHN FINAN. JAMES HAMILTON.

P. C. KERR. H. CAMPBFLL-PERRY. EDWARD J. TIGHE.

Municipal Election 1919

**Election Count in** Town Hall from **Kilgannon Foley** Collection

The background to the use of P.R. in the Sligo borough election of January 1919 lay in the poor financial condition of Sligo Corporation. In August 1917 a Local Government Board inquiry into the corporation's financial affairs blamed the poor financial situation of the corporation on 'the neglect of proper administrative procedures'.

The ratepayers decided to make an organised effort to remedy the finances of the borough and in November 1917 they formed the Sligo Ratepayers Association (S.R.A.).

The well-known Protestant and unionist businessman Arthur Jackson was elected as chairman of the S.R.A. At the first meeting the S.R.A. decided that it could achieve more by putting pressure on the corporation rather than challenging it directly.

The corporation had to accept that some kind of action was necessary and in January 1918 the corporation and the S.R.A. came to an agreement and they arranged to have a parliamentary and Labour along with one pro-Sinn Féin independent held thirteen seats on the new corporation, while the S.R.A. and the other independents had eleven seats between them.

Since the Sligo Corporation elections were the first to use P.R. in Britain or Ireland the election results attracted plenty of interest. The newspapers of all shades and opinions were quick to applaud the success of the new electoral system. The Sligo Champion declared that 'the system has justified its adoption ... and it is absolutely fair'. The Sligo Independent proudly stated that 'Sligo has the honour of being the first municipality in Ireland to adopt the principle, and everyone agrees that it was a great success'. The extraordinary success of the Sligo election was quickly followed by the adoption of P.R. at national level.

The first use of P.R. for the Sligo borough election of January 1919 was a significant milestone for democracy in Ireland. However, importantly for Sligo the use of P.R. and the crisis created by the poor financial condition of the borough provided

bill drafted and submitted to the House of Commons which would increase the powers of the corporation and a new system of election to Sligo Corporation would also be introduced. The new system of election agreed upon was P.R. with Single Transferable Voting (S.T.V.) and quota counting.



an ideal opportunity for Protestant and Catholic businessmen to come together outside the divisive politics of unionism and nationalism.

In early July 1918 Thomas Scanlon, M.P. for north Sligo introduced the bill to the House of Commons and on 30 July 1918 it received the Royal Assent and the Sligo Corporation Act of 1918 came into operation allowing the use of P.R. in Sligo Borough elections.

Sligo P.R. election 1919

		l	No.	of	Vo	tes	, 7	26.		IAS No										72	6	+ 1	-	- 81.
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CANDIDATES.	lst Count,	Transfer of Hanley's surplus	Result.	Transfer of Flizpat- rick's surplus	Result.	Transfer of Gilligen's surplus	Reault.	Transler of O'Riordan's & Haboy's rotes	Result.	Transfor of Conmy's & Sincluir's votes	Result	Trausfer of Custello's rotes	Res ult,	Transfet of Reilly's votes	Result	Transfer of Nevin's surplus	Result.	Transfer of White's sarplus	Reen's.	Transfer of Nelsoo's votes	Result.	Transfor of Warren's surplus	Res ult.	Candidates Elected in Order of Election,
CONMY, WILLIAM COSTELLO, PETER FITZPATRICK, THOMAS HENRY GILLIGAN, LUKE GRAY, JAMES HANLEY, DUDLEY M. MAHON, THOMAS MONSON, HENRY MONSON, HENRY MONSON, HENRY MONSON, JAMES JOHN NEVIN, MICHAEL O'RIORDAN, BARTH. REILLY, WILLIAM SINCLAIR, HUGH REID SINCLAIR, HUGH REID WHITE, FAT BICK NANGLE Preferences Exbausted	8 18 73 87 53 160 5 23 35 41 56 51 71 	plus 2 plus 2 plus 21 plus 21 plus 3 mians 79 plus 1 plus 1 plus 4 plus 1 plus 3 plus 3 plus 2 plus 1 plus 12 plus 12 	10 20 94 87 56 81 6 42 89 42 64 4 28 18 8 52 83 83 	plus 1 plus 1 plus 1 plus 1 plus 1 plus 2 plus 1 plus 1 plus 2 plus 1 	10 21 81 87 57 46 41 42 65 4 30 18 53 83 	minus 6 plos 1 plus 1 plus 1 plus 2 plus 1 	42 67	plus 2 plus 2 plus 2 plus 2 pl. 1 pl. 1 plus 2 minus 4 plus 1 plus 2 	10 21- 81 60 81  49 44 42 69  32 18 55 83 	minus 10  plus 2  pl 2 pl 1 pl 2 pl 2 pl 1 pl 5 plus 1  minus 18 pl 3 pl 7  pl 1 pl 1	11 81 81 82 81 52 81 52 83 55 83 2	minus21 plus 3 plus 4 plus 1 plus 5 plus 4  plus 3  plus 3	**************************************	 plus 7  plus 7 plus 1 plus 1 plus 1 plus 18 minus 36  plus 4	**************************************	plus 2 plus 2 minu-12 plns 1 plns 1		plas 1 plas 1 plas 2  minus 2	81 81 81 74 81  68 51 50 81  66 81 12	 plus gl plus 12 minus 50  plus 32  plus 32 	 81 81 75 81  98 81  98 81  15	plus 1  plus 16  misus17 	 81 81 76 81 70 79  81 81 81 15	Fitzpatrick (3), Conneillor Gilligan (2), Alderman Gray (8), Councillor Hanley (1), Alderman M'Donagh (7), Councillor Nevin (5), Councillor Warren (6), Councillor White (4), Coneillor
Totale	726		726		726		726		726		725		726		726		726		726		728		726	

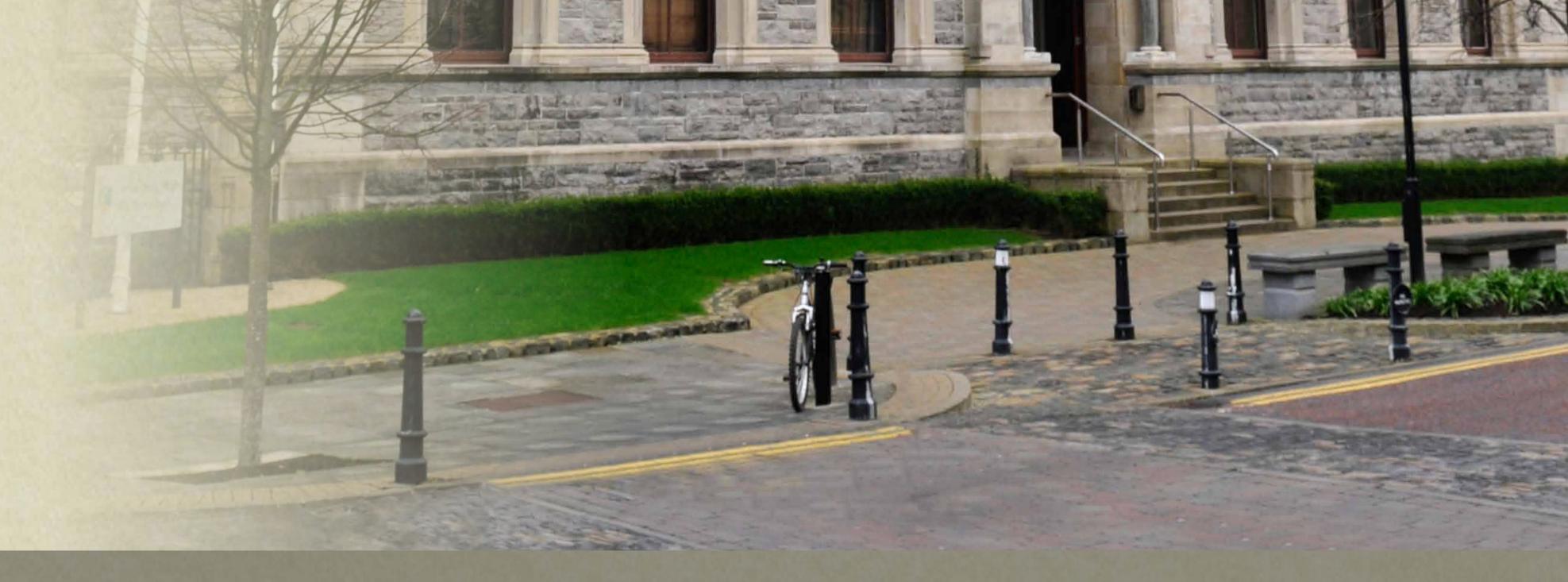
ZLECTIONS, THE TRANSFERABLE VOTE, INFORMATIVE LETTER FROM MR HUMPHREYS. We have received the following letter	contation within each Ward, with the result that practically all ditizens of Sligo will feel that they have at least one repre- sentative on the Connell. "If the figures are examined it will be seen that in the North Ward seven of the eight elected were at the head of the	"In the elections just held every citizen must have fels how free he must in expres- slog his choice on the ballot paper. Every party, too, was free to nominate as many candidates as it desired. If the Single Vote had not been transferable, all freedom and elasticity would have dis- appeared. In order to secure representa- tion, the minorities would be compelled to	non-transferable; in the East Ward 15; and in the West Ward, 82. This is a small percentage in each case. In the North Ward, about 12 of the 16 votes credited to Mr Derrig had to be trasted as non-transferable because they were plumpers. The futility of plumpers was realised by all who were present at the count when those papers were examined. I also gave the advice that no one should assess that their favourite was safe. The		
of the Propartional Representation Society, who worked with so much en- thusiness at the recent Municipal Elections in Silgo in order to make the system a nuccess :	Ward seven of these elected were also at the head of the poll on the first county and that in the West Ward also seven of those elected were at the head of the poll on the first count. In the presence of these figures some citizens may be in- clined to think that the work of trans- farring votes imposed upon the Returning	strength, to reduce the number of their condidates accordingly, and to issue very precise instructions to their supporters as to the condidate for whom they should record their single vote. The election would be most rigid in all its aspects. With the Transferable Vote, there is	they gave their vote to the man they inked bast, and, if they did not, they alone are to blame if their real favourite suf- fered loss. "The election at Sligo and its results have already aroused considerable interest, as will be seen from the comments of the Dublin Press, and there is no doubt that it		

system, the other 19 being due to other would be a great delusion. If the single advice that they should use to the fall will arouse a very large measure of inreasons, one braring no official mark, note were non-transferable, minorities their privilege of expressing preferances, refert throughout the United Kingdom some having writing, the Thus, the world still obtain representation, but the At the conclusion of the counts in the British Dominions, and the United number of spolled papers due to Proper, whole character of the election would be North Ward, 20 papers were treated as Subles,

Sligo P.R. election 1919, East Ward

As a result of the media hype, the turnout for the election had been very high. The S.R.A. had done very well at the polls and had received 823 first preference votes in all three wards, securing thirty-seven per cent of the total vote and gaining eight seats for the party, five Protestants and three Catholics were elected. Sinn Féin got seven seats, Labour secured five seats while the independents gained four seats. Sinn Féin

**Town Hall** 



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