

The Australian Ballot in Massachusetts.

The Springfield Republican pronounces the Australian ballot system, as tested in Massachusetts for the first time on last election day, to have been "an unquestionable success." "That is the verdict," it says, "of all sorts and conditions of men except the vote peddlers and poll deal hangers on." It entirely disappointed all those who make a trade of politics; the party "worker" found himself altogether unable to thrust his ballot in to the voter's hand and watch him until he handed it in at the window. The overseers of factories who have been in the habit of standing at the polls and checking off the names of the workmen and operatives to see that they voted the ticket that had been handed them were conspicuous by their absence. The voter took the ticket printed by the State, entered the room provided for him, secretly put his mark against names of the candidates he preferred, folded it also in secret, handed it to the judges and went his way, no man knowing not even the judges themselves, for whom he had cast his vote. The process of voting went on like clockwork, one man only entering the room at the time, and the precincts were so arranged as to give the opportunity for every man to be at his ease. It has proven to be, by the tests applied to it, the perfection of voting. "All manner of evils and discomforts of election," says the Republican, "disappear in the use of this system. There are no possible frauds of deceiving tickets headed 'republican' and cunningly concealing democratic nominations, or vice versa. Without the voluntary co-operation of voters, there can be no 'selling out,' no 'combines,' no 'deals,' such as did so much in New York toward electing Harrison and Hill last fall—none of these things is possible. The independent voter does not have to hunt for 'pastors' or cut out names from one ballot to stick upon another. The voting places are not littered with torn and trampled tickets, and the absence of the 'workers' contributes freedom from pools of tobacco spittle on the floor and from rum-laden air." It was thought that it would require not less than two trials of the law to educate the voters to that point when they would take kindly to the new order of things, but the distribution of sample ballots before the election and the clear instructions given as to the method of voting enabled each voter to acquaint himself with his duties and to exercise them as though he had never voted any other way. The only assistance required was for those who, by blindness or other physical disability, were unable to mark their ballots, and of these the number was very few. "The speed of voting differed considerably with the precincts. In the South Boston wards in those at the North End the voting was slow because of the number of laboring voters. Many of those used the sample marked ballot furnished by the city committee as a guide in marking the official ballot. No objection was made to this. Though the law prescribes that no one shall occupy a compartment more than ten minutes, no one was called out so long as no other voters were waiting. Some cases were noted

where twenty minutes were consumed in preparing the ballot. In the Back Bay precincts two minutes were the average time. In one precinct in Lowell 368 ballots were cast in one hour." The experience gained at the late election will serve hereafter as a guide with respect to the average number of votes that can be cast in an hour, and the number of voting places will be regulated thereby. At this election every privileged voter got in his vote, and the same report of the success of the system is coming in from the counties as well as from the cities.—*Baltimore Sun.*

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