

Only students of the representative system in England can adequately realize the full meaning of Mr. Long's statement that the electoral code is to be embodied in an act of not more than thirty sections. Since Englishmen first went to the polls to vote for members of the house of commons there never was, until this bill of 1917 was introduced, even an attempt to embody all the electoral laws in a single act of parliament. As regards actual changes in the representative system, the most radical and far-reaching is the admission of women to the franchise. "We include the enfranchisement of women," says Mr. Long, "on the lines indicated in Mr. Speaker's conference by a large majority. We fix the age at which women shall be qualified to vote at thirty." Another radical change is the abolition of the plural voter. Heretofore there were men who from their ownership of freeholds exercised at a general election as many as fifteen or twenty, or even more, votes. Under the bill it will not be possible for any elector to cast more than two votes. These votes will be based on occupation as distinct from possession, which was the only qualification of the great majority of plural voters under the representative system as it had developed from the sixteenth century to the reform act of 1884-85. The great increase in the electorate under the new bill will come from (1) the inclusion of about 6,000,000 women, and (2) the shortening of the qualifying period from a year to six months, and the simplification of registration procedure provided for in the bill. Another quite noteworthy provision is that all elections shall take place on the same day. There are also clauses determining the conditions under which absentees may record their votes.

EDWARD PORRITT.

French War Cabinets. French ministries have been "reorganized" on four different occasions since the outbreak of the European war: August, 1914, October, 1915, December, 1916, and March, 1917. The beginning of the war found in power a ministry which had been formed by M. Viviani in the preceding month of June. Some three weeks after the outbreak of the war (August 26), M. Viviani having reached the conclusion that it was desirable to "broaden the basis" of the ministry to enable it to handle more effectively the heavy and difficult problems raised by the war, placed the resignations of himself and his colleagues in the hands of the president and urged him to appoint a ministry of "national defense." The resignations were accepted and M. Viviani himself was requested by the president to form a new

ministry on the basis suggested. Owing to the increased duties which the war imposed upon the premier (the president of the council, as he is called in France), M. Viviani introduced the innovation of taking the premiership without portfolio. With a view to attracting the support of the anti-military socialists he called into the ministry two representatives of this group, Marcel Sembat and Jules Guesde the latter well-known for his socialist orthodoxy and his extreme anti-militaristic views. M. Guesde, like the premier, became a minister without portfolio. The appointment of two ministers without portfolio marked the revival of a practice which had not been followed in France since the Second Empire. The dissociation of the presidency of the council from an office seems to be entirely without precedent in France. Another feature of the Viviani ministry was an unusually large number of under-secretaries of state—eight altogether—four of whom were attached to the ministry of war. This practice has been common in France in recent years although the number of under-secretaries attached to any cabinet has rarely exceeded two or three. The ministry as thus constituted was composed of fourteen members (not counting the under-secretaries¹) as against twelve, the number in the preceding cabinet.

The chamber of deputies promptly accorded the new ministry a practically unanimous vote of confidence; but before many months had passed this confidence was shaken by the unfortunate events in the Balkans, notably the outcome of the Dardanelles expedition and the failure of British and French diplomacy to win over to the side of the Allies Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania. Delcassé, minister of foreign affairs, and Millerand, minister of war, in particular became objects of attack, and on October 13 Delcassé resigned. Viviani eloquently defended the ministry from attack and warned the chamber that it was undertaking "a heavy responsibility in overthrowing the government in the face of the enemy," and told them that if the ministry were condemned their successors would be obliged

¹ The question as to whether under-secretaries of state are a part of the ministry to which they are attached is discussed by Duguit, *Droit Constitutionnel*, vol. II, pp. 494-495. Until 1906 they never attended the meetings of the council of ministers but in that year the ministry decided that henceforth they should attend. Apparently they have only a consultative voice in the deliberations. Constitutionally they are not responsible to the chambers, but Duguit remarks that those who have been vested by decree with determinate functions are in fact responsible. In practice they always tender their resignations whenever the ministry to which they are attached resigns.

to bring about an immediate victory under penalty of being overthrown in their turn—an achievement which no ministry could guarantee. There was, however, considerable feeling that the basis of the existing ministry was not sufficiently broad and that a coalition government composed of the representatives of a larger number of political groups whose support it was desirable to attract would possess greater elements of strength. In consequence of this growing disaffection the size of the votes of confidence continued to dwindle, and finally when 150 deputies abstained from voting on an order of the day involving a question of confidence the ministry resigned (October 29, 1915), although it still had a very substantial majority in the chamber.

M. Briand, who had already been president of the council four times during the preceding six years, was charged with forming a new ministry. M. Briand did not follow the innovation of M. Viviani but himself took the portfolio of foreign affairs, although in fact the chief burden of the office was devolved upon M. Jules Cambon, who was appointed to the position of secretary-general of the ministry of foreign affairs. Six under-secretaries of state were attached to the ministry and five *ministres d'état* without portfolios were added. The latter were: the aged Senator Freycinet, a moderate Republican, who had already served in thirteen ministries, in four of which he had been the chief; the extreme radical Dr. Combes, a former premier, violently hated by the clerical party for the severity with which he had enforced the law against the congregations; Léon Bourgeois, a radical socialist statesman of distinguished ability; Jules Guesde, the most orthodox of socialists; and Denys Cochin, a representative of the ultra clerical and reactionary party. On account of the criticism which had been directed against Millerand, he was left out of the new cabinet and to the alarm of some ultra civilians the ministry of war was assigned to a distinguished soldier, General Gallieni, military governor of Paris. General Gallieni died in March, 1916, and was succeeded by General Roques. Admiral Lacaze was appointed minister of marine. While it has been the general practice in recent years to place civilians at the head of the ministries of war and marine, it has by no means been invariable; and in a goodly number of instances these posts have been occupied by military and naval men. The ministry as thus constituted was composed of 23 members, counting the under-secretaries, the largest in size ever known in France, at least since the establishment of the Third Republic. It was preëminently a coalition ministry of widely diverse political views, being made up of representatives of the unified

socialist party, the independent socialists, radicals and socialist radicals, moderate republicans, progressives and reactionaries (the Right). The ministry contained six former premiers and altogether ranked considerably above the average in ability.

The chamber promptly accorded its confidence by a vote of 515 to 1 (100 of the 602 deputies were absent, having joined the colors); but signs of disaffection presently began to appear, the number of interpellations increased and the size of the votes of confidence grew smaller and smaller. There was especial dissatisfaction with the results at the front and a strong demand grew up for the reorganization of the High Command and the adoption of more energetic measures to achieve a victory for which the country was becoming more and more impatient. There was also considerable feeling that the ministry was too large and unwieldy and that the responsibility for the maintenance of the national defense was too widely distributed. On December 7, the chamber adopted an order of the day expressing its confidence in the government, but there was a considerable negative vote (360 to 141). The resolution of confidence also declared in favor of a reorganization of the High Command and the concentration of the direction of the war in a smaller body, following the recent action of the English government.

After this vote the ministry resigned and a new one with Briand as chief was constituted. In fact, what took place was a reorganization of the existing ministry and a reduction of its size. Admiral Lacaze was retained as the head of the ministry of marine and General Lyautey resident general of Morocco and a soldier with a distinguished record in Africa, became minister of war. In order to reduce the unwieldy size of the ministry, the portfolios of justice, public instruction and labor were consolidated and placed in the hands of M. Viviani. Likewise the ministries of commerce, industry and agriculture were consolidated. On the other hand, in consequence of the increased importance of the food supply, transportation and munitions, those services were organized into separate departments, at the head of each of which was placed a minister or a technical director. Three under-secretaries of state were retained but the five ministers of state (without portfolio) whom Viviani had attached to his cabinet were omitted. Provision was made for a "war committee" composed of the prime minister and the ministers of war, marine, finance and munitions, to which was added the president of the republic. With a view to coördinating the work of national defense the minister of war was required to notify

the other members of the committee, and also the commanding generals, of its decisions and to take measures to secure their concerted execution. The committee was to have a large power of direction and was made responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the nation's resources. The High Command was reorganized by the removal of Joffre and the appointment of General Nivelle as commander-in-chief of the armies of the north and the northeast. At the same time the rank of marshal was revived and conferred upon Joffre, who became technical advisor to the war committee.

This ministry was destined to be the shortest lived of any of the French war cabinets. Its economic policy became the object of especial attack and on March 17, 1917, three months after it came into power, it resigned. General Lyautey's resignation, in fact, preceded by several weeks those of his colleagues although he had not been the object of special attack, his resignation being due, it is said, to his ignorance of parliamentary procedure. The minister of finance, the venerable Senator Ribot, who had already served as premier of four ministries, was charged with the organization of a new ministry, and the rapidity with which he accomplished the task broke all records, the new ministry having been constituted within the brief period of forty-eight hours—this, notwithstanding the fact that the task was not an easy one, as a goodly number of persons to whom portfolios were tendered refused to accept them, while others after having accepted subsequently withdrew. Briand was asked to remain in the cabinet as minister of foreign affairs but he declined on the ground that having dealt with the Allies in the dual capacity of premier and foreign minister he would be unable to exercise the same influence in the latter capacity only. Moreover, in consequence of the hostility manifested toward him by certain groups in the chamber he felt that his presence in the new cabinet would be a source of weakness rather than of strength. Senator Ribot thereupon took the portfolio of foreign affairs. Admiral Lacaze was retained as minister of marine but in view of some criticism of the policy of placing military men in charge of the war department a civilian was now appointed head of the ministry of war. The new appointee was Prof. Paul Painlevé, who had recently been minister of public instruction and inventions. Viviani, Bourgeois and Albert Thomas were taken over from the old ministry. The under-secretaryships of the previous ministry were continued but no ministers *sans portefeuille* were appointed. The Ribot government has proved to be a rather strong and popular one and its tenure already exceeds the average duration of French ministries.

Four ministries in less than three years will of course be regarded by critics of the French parliamentary system as further evidence of its weakness and instability; but those who so regard it overlook the fact that in no case has a ministry since the outbreak of the war been forced by the parliament to resign. In every case the outgoing ministry had the confidence of a substantial majority of the chamber of deputies and its resignation was entirely voluntary. Moreover, in no case did the government actually pass from one political party to another; each new ministry was in fact a reorganization of the preceding ministry, and in several cases something like half the members of the new ministry were taken over from the retiring ministry. The result in each case was not the overthrow of the existing government but rather the strengthening of it by adding statesmen who were believed to be better qualified to perform the heavy and difficult tasks imposed by the war; by the introduction of leaders of important groups whose support it was desirable to attract; or by reducing the size of the ministry and concentrating the direction of the war in fewer hands, so as to insure greater vigor and energy. This was in line with the policy pursued in England and there was nothing which indicated chronic weakness or instability in the French parliamentary system.

JAMES W. GARNER.