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In Tropic Gardens Greenhouse, Quakertown, Pa., Webster-Nesbitt Unit Heaters supplement pipe coils under greenhouse beds, equipped with Webster Manifold Coil Orifice Fittings.

An interesting feature is the night operation of Webster-Nesbitt Unit Heaters during snowfall, keeping the glass free of snow and avoiding a snow removal operation.

In Chevalley greenhouses, Bayport, L. I. Rose Grower, Webster Series "26" Traps assure instant heat from long pipe coils.

Your nearest Webster Representative is a trained heating man. Write us about your problem. We will pass it on to him and he will be glad to work on it with you.

WARREN WEBSTER & CO., Camden, N. J.
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HEATING SYSTEMS

Perspective

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Dumb Devils and Dumb Reformers

by RAYMOND MOLEY

IN the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, there is an account of the casting out of a devil that was dumb. There is also an immortal commentary on the general practice of casting out devils—dumb and otherwise. The point made is that, unless the caster-outers of devils are wise, the quarters cleaned and vacated will also be occupied by seven spirits more unclean than the one which was cast out.

There is something here for the consideration of reformers, especially for the consideration of those reformers who believe in breaking up political parties by devices such as proportional representation.

In 1936, the City of New York, which was then in the full flower of La Guardia reform, adopted PR as a method of electing its city council. The usual arguments for that system prevailed—that it provided representation of minorities; weakened machine rule; and that a legislative body should not represent geographical districts, but like-minded people, wherever they might live. It was said: "Let people who think alike but live apart vote together."

Please do not expect me to explain PR on this page. I once spent three hours with a blackboard and a lot of loose paper explaining PR to a charter commission, and the most intelligent member of that body asked me if I would come back the next night and do it all over again.

New York learns slowly, but after ten years of experience, it has thrown out PR and has gone back to district representation.

The shock which brought New Yorkers to this action was the impish success of Communists and fellow travelers in using this implement of reform to get into office. But the basic reason which moved many intelligent people to turn against PR was far more profound.

IN the first place, it did not weaken machine rule. It simply destroyed two-party government. There is a real distinction there. La Guardia won two elections while PR prevailed, but PR elected Tammany majorities in the council. The Republican party in New York City, which is not so well organized, can usually get a sizable vote in a state or national election, but it

ended up with only three of the 23 members of the city council.

The Communist party in 1946 in the city of New York polled 90,000 of a total all-party vote of about 2,500,000. But in 1945 it elected two councilmen. The American Labor party, deeply dyed with Communist influence, elected two members, and another "splinter party," the Liberals, elected two.

Thus, PR stands convicted of giving greatly disproportionate representation to virile minorities and to an organized machine. It practically destroyed the Republican party's influence in the city. And it completely wiped out the middle-of-the-road independents whose interests were supposed to be conserved by this system.

This happened because in a big city the average voter who is not an active member of a party simply cannot know the people on a long ticket. He must vote blindly or capriciously. Reformers used to talk about the virtues of a short ballot. But PR provides a ballot like a page from the telephone book.

PR first appeared in the United States in Ashtabula, Ohio, in 1915. I am willing to confess, with some embarrassment, that I then favored the system. As a specialist in political science, I helped the Ashtabula Board of Elections count the votes. My faith in the system began to dim when, in succeeding elections, a minority of very shady councilmen were elected year after year.

CLEVELAND later adopted the system, and the first election was held in 1923. I carefully studied that election and wrote a long analysis of it. My conclusions were exactly what New York has learned in the past ten years. The vote was dominated by machine discipline, by minorities, by racial and religious prejudice. It was also dominated by caprice. A councilman was elected because his name was on a popular brand of cigars. The "Mc's" voted for Mc's, and the "ski's" voted for ski's.

Voters abhor a vacuum, and when there are no party labels, they adopt other distinctions which are either irrelevant or dangerous. It is a pity that high-minded people learn this so slowly and at such a high price.

