

small nations, and America's participation in a league for the maintenance of a just and durable peace. Persons who took part in the proceedings included Vice-president Marshall, Hon. Geo W. Wickersham, Hon. Henry L. Stimson, Rear-admiral Robert E. Peary, Hon. Oscar S. Straus, Hon. John Sharp Williams, and Professors Franklin H. Giddings, John H. Latané, Philip M. Brown, Ellery C. Stowell, and Samuel T. Dutton. Many national and local organizations appointed delegates, and the sessions were unusually well attended.

A national conference on foreign relations of the United States was held at Long Beach, Long Island, May 28 to June 1, under the auspices of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York. Subjects discussed included the need of better machinery for international negotiations, the attitude of the United States toward world organization, the democratic ideal in international relations, the United States and the Caribbean, the drawing together of the Americas, national policy as to resident aliens, newer American conceptions of international relationship, and the United States and the Far East. The addresses and discussions have been published in a volume of the Proceedings of the Academy.

**Electoral Reform in the United Kingdom.** In introducing the franchise bill to the house of commons on May 15, Mr. Walter Long, secretary for the colonies in the Lloyd George administration, was careful to state that the bill was not a government measure. It is the fourth reform bill since 1830, and the only bill dealing with the franchise that can be described as an agreed bill—a measure to which the leaders of political parties had given their assent before it was submitted to parliament. The act of 1832, it will be recalled, was carried by a Whig administration against persistent opposition from the Conservatives. A Conservative administration carried the act of 1867 through parliament; but in the house of commons the Liberal opposition, headed by Gladstone, had a large part in moulding the form in which the bill went to the house of lords. The Gladstone government of 1880–1885 carried the act of 1884, but had to make terms with the opposition as to the order in which the franchise and redistribution bills were proceeded with. The new bill, forced on parliament and the government by electoral exigencies growing out of the war, is based on resolutions adopted at a conference presided over by the speaker, Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, in which representatives of all parties in

the house of commons took part. The whole procedure preliminary to the bill was new in British parliamentary history. Its only parallel would seem to be the procedure adopted at Ottawa since 1903, when the decennial redistribution bill is before the house of commons. There in accordance with a praiseworthy innovation introduced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier when he was premier from 1896 to 1911, the redistribution bill is read a first time and then referred for settlement of boundaries of constituencies to a special committee whose members are nominated by both political parties.

"This," said Mr. Long, when under the ten minute rule he introduced the bill of May 15, "is not a government bill, but the result of a conference at which all parties and all sections in this house were represented. In its preparation the same rule has been followed, inasmuch as the government committee which is responsible for turning the recommendations of the conference into the form of a bill was composed of men representing many shades of political opinion." "It deals," added Mr. Long (who introduced the bill in the absence, through illness, of Sir George Cave, the home secretary), "with all the recommendations of the conference—franchise, registration, the conduct and cost of elections, redistribution and other questions."

English newspapers to hand up to the day when this note was written—June 5, 1917—contained reports only of the brief debate at first reading stage on May 15, and summaries of the bill. By cable there has been news that at second reading the bill was carried by a large majority,—not more than forty members, nearly all of them Conservatives, voting for the motion to reject on the ground that wartime was not an appropriate season for an extensive readjustment of the electoral system.

The bill as introduced can well be described as a sweeping measure, more radical and more comprehensive than the act of 1867 or 1884-85. In commenting on the simplification of the electoral code that will result from the bill, Mr. Long told the house that the bill repealed no fewer than thirty-one statutes dealing with the representative system, and partly repealed thirty-two more, also concerned with the representation. "And the whole law," he added, "is brought into the bill which contains a little more than thirty clauses, with schedules. There were reports that we were shortening the bill by handing over everything to be done by orders-in-council. There is no foundation for that statement. Everything is within the four corners of the bill, either in the clauses or in the schedules."

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