S. T. BACON.
Ballot-Box.

No. 203,525. Patented May 14, 1878.

Fig. 1.

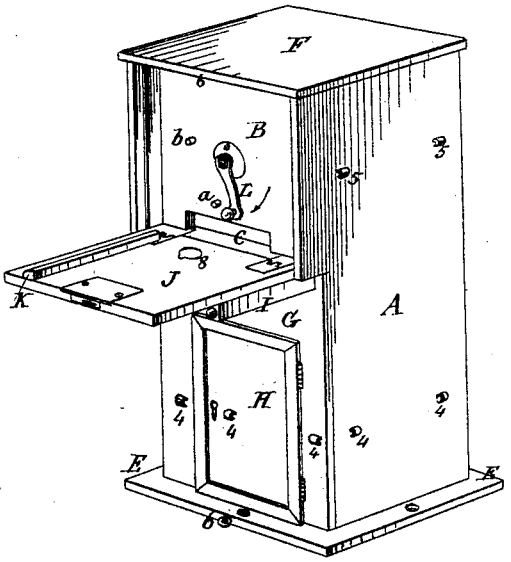


Fig. 2.

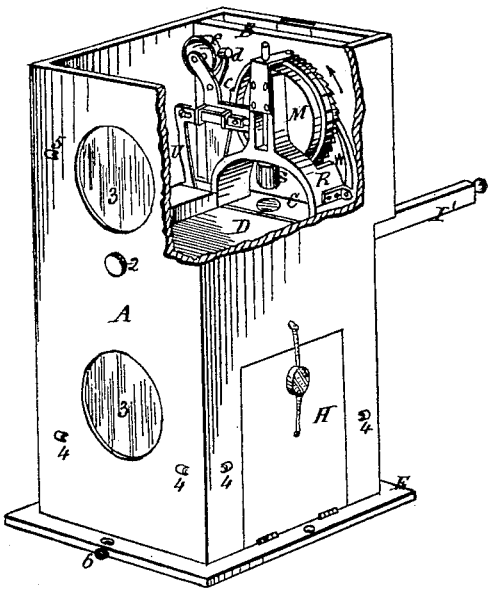


Fig. 3.

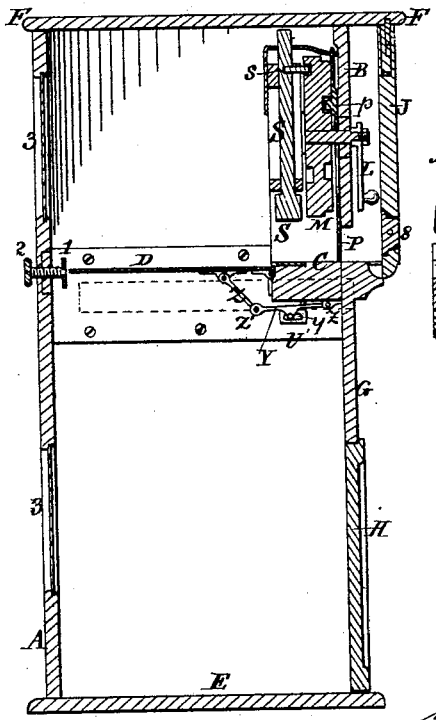


Fig. 4.

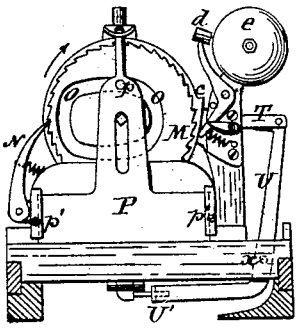


Fig. 5.

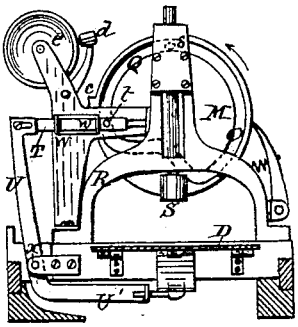
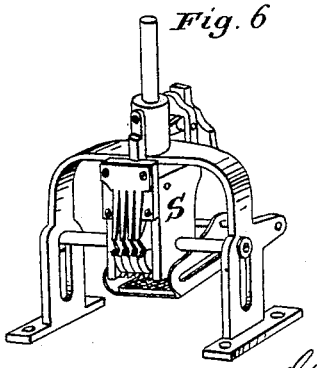


Fig. 6



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

STEUBEN T. BACON, OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

IMPROVEMENT IN BALLOT-BOXES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **203,525**, dated May 14, 1878; application filed March 16, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, STEUBEN TAYLOR BACON, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk and State of Massachusetts, have invented new and useful Improvements in Ballot-Boxes, which improvements are fully set forth in the following specification.

Hitherto in the construction of ballot-boxes no attention appears to have been given to the great and imperative need of such a method as will detect ballots that have been fraudulently cast or deposited therein, or that have been surreptitiously placed among lawful ballots while being assorted or counted, or that have been abstracted from the counting-table by designing persons who, as wardens, inspectors, judges, or clerks, are charged with the simple duty of conducting the election, and faithfully, honestly, and impartially ascertaining and declaring the exact state and result of all the ballots lawfully cast at elections.

My invention, which is designed to be used supplementarily to a law easily framed, effectually and radically detects and defeats all these frauds and thefts, and enables the officials in charge of each election precinct to determine each and every ballot lawfully in contradistinction from those unlawfully cast.

It is the duty of the officer who is charged with the custody and operating of my apparatus at elections to require all who assist him in conducting the election to sign with him a certificate at the opening of the polls stating that they had at that time examined the ballot-box and found it empty, and locked it; that the consecutive numbering apparatus indicated or stood at, say, figure 1, and at the close of the polls another certificate stating that they had at that time again examined the consecutive numbering apparatus and found it to indicate or stand at, say, 497; and that the certificate signed by them would immediately be passed through the apparatus and receive that number, 497, thus showing that 496 consecutively-numbered ballots—no more and no less—had been cast, and that they would justly be required to account to the electors of that precinct for that number of ballots. They then proceed to canvass, assort, and count the ballots, and find that number of ballots bearing each its own consecutive number. They also resort to the check-list and count the names checked as voted, and find the same number, proving that the three tests harmonize. But suppose they also find therewith a quantity of ballots bearing no numbers, for although the elector may have cast or deposited two or more ballots, yet only the top one would or could take a number. This would show an unmistakable fraud by double voting or stuffing to the extent of all the unnumbered ballots found among the numbered or lawful ballots, and hence all the unnumbered ballots would, by the law, be thrown out as illegally cast. It will be seen, therefore, that one ballot only, cast by each elector, has a distinctive number upon it that distinguishes it from all other ballots cast; hence no vigilance against double voting or stuffing is essential.

After the ballots have been assorted, counted, and the result declared, it is essential that they should all be safely and securely kept, to meet the demand of candidates for office defeated by the original count and declaration of the result of the election for a recount thereof. For this purpose I surround the ballot-box or receptacle in which the ballots are kept with wire, holding it in place by staples, and unite the ends of the wire over the key-hole of the lock of said receptacle with a metallic seal. This wire and seal may also be applied to the voting apparatus during the interval between elections.

The object sought to be attained by the use of the metallic seal and wire is to have a check by which the authorities may know whether or not the contents may have been tampered with, and finding the wire or seal broken or changed from their original condition, they may justly refuse a recount, and hence confirm the former declaration of the results of the election in that precinct.

To enable others to make and use my said invention, I shall now proceed to describe the manner in which the same is or may be carried into effect, reference being had to the accompanying drawing, in which—

Figure 1 represents a perspective view of the ballot-box ready for use. Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the same box seen from the opposite end, with the top removed and portion of the wall broken away to exhibit the apparatus for counting, registering, and other operations. Fig. 3 is a vertical section of the

box; and Figs. 4, 5, and 6 are detail views of the mechanism used in connection therewith.

In said figures, A is the box, which may be said to consist of two parts—the upper part, which contains the registering apparatus, and is the part in which are deposited the ballots, and the lower part, which is a receptacle in which the registered and deposited ballots are gathered or collected. The two parts are divided by a hinged or movable partition, D, which, during one part of the operation, is a table, and during another a drop, as will hereinafter more fully appear.

Both the lower and upper parts of the box may be made of any suitable material and size, with the rear and side walls each made in one piece, which are firmly united onto a base, E, and permanently covered by a top plate or board, F. The front part of the box may be made in two parts. The one, B, closing the upper part of the box is firmly united with the sides and cover, and rests upon a sill, C, which is a cross-piece extending from side to side of the box, and projecting in front and in the rear of the part of plate B. On the under side the board or plate B is cut away to leave an elongated narrow slit or opening over the sill large enough for the easy passage of a ballot through it. The lower part of the box is closed in front by a plate or wall, G, which is provided with a door, H, to permit access to the interior of the box. This door is shown in Fig. 1 applied to the front of the ballot-box and hinged on the side; but the door may be applied on either side, and may be hinged at the bottom, as shown in Fig. 2, or on top, as may be deemed best.

A lock or other device may be used for closing the door and securing the contents of the box.

As so far described, the box is a closed box, having only a ballot-receiving opening in the front B. I prefer, however, that when the box is not in use it shall be entirely closed. For this purpose I extend the sides corresponding to the upper part of the box, and also the top plate as well as the sill, and I hinge to the latter part a flap, J, which may be shut up against the extended upper portion, and by means of a lock permanently secured thereto, as shown in Fig. 3. When the ballot-box is in use, however, the flap J is let down on two slides, I I′, which are concealed in suitable pockets in the interior of the box, but are drawn out therefrom to support the flap in a horizontal position, the upper surface now constituting a table upon which the ballot may be deposited by the elector. To insure the ballot being shoved into the box through the slot, a guide, K, which may be made adjustable, according to the size of the ballot, is secured on either or both sides of table side of the flap.

The mechanism which I have devised to properly control and verify the casting of votes consists of various parts, all connected with and operated by a crank, which is the only part of the mechanism outside of the box. This crank L is mounted on the end of the shaft which passes through bearings in the plate or board B. Upon the other end of the shaft, in the rear of the plate B, is mounted a single or double wheel, M. (Shown in perspective view in Fig. 2, in section in Fig. 3, and in front and rear elevation in Figs. 4 and 5.) On the periphery of the wheel may be cut, or a flange or circular recess thereof may be provided with, inclined teeth or ratchet-teeth, and a spring-pawl, N, arranged to mesh in with said teeth, prevents the wheel from being rotated in any but one direction, as indicated by the arrows. On the face of said wheel there is cut a cam-groove, O, which, by means of a pin, *p*, projecting from the rear of a plate, P, operates a vertical slide attached to said plate P. The plate and slide may be made in one piece, as shown in the drawings, and the slide may be made to move in suitable guides *p′ p′* on the sides of the opening of the ballot-receiving slot. This slide is immediately back of the front plate B, so that when the slide is down the ballot-receiving slot is perfectly closed.

The cam-groove O is so formed that the slide is lifted up during one quarter-revolution of the crank—that is, when crank moves from the points *a* to *b*—and is closed again during the next quarter-revolution of the crank, and is kept closed the next half-revolution of the crank—that is, until the crank shall have come to point *a*.

For reason that I shall hereinafter explain, I provide two stops, *a* and *b*, on the face of the plate B, to arrest the crank in its rotation just before opening and just before closing the slide. To this effect two spring knobs or lugs in their normal condition project from the face of plate B in the path of the crank, and must be depressed successively before the crank can proceed upon its course.

The wheel M bears upon its periphery a cam, *c*, which operates the tail-piece of an elbow-lever carrying a hammer, *d*, to strike a bell, *e*, the arrangement of these parts being such that the bell is struck immediately after the crank shall have passed the point *a*, thus giving the alarm and announcing that the slide is rising for the reception of the ballot.

The rear face of the wheel M has a groove, Q, which is arranged to operate the canceling, registering, and numbering apparatus, as well as the drop, in the manner as follows: In a frame, R, straddling across the opening or ballot-receiving slot, and immediately over the sill C, is arranged to move in suitable bearings therein a stamp provided with an inking device and permutative numbers to print automatically and consecutively at each depression numbers from zero to one thousand or ten thousand, or any given number. Such a numbering-stamp I have shown in Fig. 6; but I would here say that I do not claim to have invented such a stamp, but only claim the use and application of the same or its equivalent

in connection with my ballot-box. Such automatic numbering-stamps have been known and made in this country, and the kind which I prefer to use is the one known as the "French Consecutive Numbering-Machine," and is manufactured by Horace Holt in the city of New York.

In adapting such a machine, however, to my invention, I dispense with springs, handpiece, or lever to operate the same, but actuate it positively by means of a pin, *s*, projecting from the stem of the stamp S, and engaging in the groove Q on the wheel M. This groove is formed in such a way in relation to the other groove on the face of the wheel as that it shall operate the stamp immediately after the slide shall have been closed or after the crank shall have made half of its revolution from the point *a*. At that time the stamp is operated—that is to say, depressed—to make its impression upon the ballot.

The same groove engages also with a pin, *t*, which projects from a sliding bar, T, moving transversely in ways *w*, and operating a bent lever, U, pivoted at *x*. This lever, being tilted on its pivot *x*, causes the depression of its extremity U′, which is slotted, and carries in its slot an operating-pin, *y*, of a lever, Y, which is pivoted at one end, *z*, the other end, *z′*, being connected, by means of link Z, with the under side of the table D. This tilting of the lever, therefore, will cause also the tilting of the table D to drop the ballot into the receptacle below, and this tilting is timed by the relative positions of pin *s* to pin *t*, so that this shall be effected after the stamp shall have performed its operation and lifted up.

It may be necessary to prevent the ballot from being shoved too far and out of reach of action of the stamp. To this effect I provide at the end of the table D a stop, 1, which may be made, by means of a screw, 2, operated from without, adjustable to be adapted to ballots of various sizes. Both the table and the stop may be slotted to interlock when the latter is moved forward to reduce the depth of the ballot-supporting table, and to prevent, as before said, the ballot from being pushed too far and beyond the action of the canceling-instrument.

To watch the operation of the apparatus, it may be deemed necessary to have windows in some convenient part of the box.

In Figs. 2 and 3 I have shown two circular windows inserted in the rear of the box corresponding to the upper and lower part thereof. This will not only enable the observer to watch the operation of the apparatus, but will also throw light into the interior of the box when it is necessary to observe the condition of the registering mechanism from the opposite side. This is always necessary at the beginning and end of the performance of the machine.

To conveniently observe the condition of the stamp, an orifice is made in the table J, diagonally opposite the lower side of the stamp.

When the slide P is raised, and the light through the windows strikes the stamp, the figure or figures thereon can be readily read and adjusted. Other means, however, may be employed to set and adjust the numbering-stamp. Such means will readily suggest themselves to any person that may be called upon to use the instrument. The orifice in the flap J may be closed by a snugly-fitting plug or stopper, 8, flush with the upper and under sides of the flap. This plug may be held there in place by means of a side pin or bolt, which can be operated from the upper side of the table of flap J when let down.

Extra covers may be put over the glasses, to protect them against accidental or designed fracture, and to thus protect the contents of the box.

During the balloting, it will be understood, the box is securely locked. After the balloting, and as an additional security, the flap J is shut up and locked, and a wire band or bands are passed through staples 4 4 4, and also through staples 5 5 5, and, if desired, also through staples 6 6 6, and a metallic seal may be used to firmly unite the loose ends of the band.

The staples are preferably so arranged as to cause the wires to pass over the locks, thereby preventing possibility of picking the locks; but even if by some means it were possible to pick the lock, it would be impossible to open the door without breaking the wire or seal, and this would at once furnish the proof upon which the recount of the ballot can and should be rejected.

The operation of this instrument will be as follows: Place the ballot face down upon the front or receiving table J; press in the stop *a;* turn the crank L to the stop *b*. By so doing the gong-bell *e*, operated by the projection *c* on the cam-wheel M, is struck, to inform all the electors present that a ballot is about to be cast. The slide P, operated by the cam M, now opens. Pass the ballot in and place it upon the table D, and under the consecutive-numbering apparatus S. Now press the stop *b* and turn the crank around to the stop *a*, the starting and stopping point. By so doing the slide closes, and the consecutive-numbering apparatus, driven by the cam M, prints upon the ballot its own consecutive number. The rear table D, operated by the same cam M, is depressed, thereby permitting the ballot to descend to the lower part of the ballot-box, and the table is raised to its place ready to proceed with the next ballot. The adjustable stop 1 is for the purpose of voting with a short ballot when only one or a few persons are to be voted for. For this purpose the stop will be moved forward.

To ascertain the state of the consecutive-numbering machine, remove the plug 8 in the front table by sliding back the bolt which

holds it in place, or look into a mirror placed under the consecutive-numbering apparatus, or look through the window 3 at the last ballot cast.

The front table J answers the double purpose of receiving the ballot and affording protection from injury to the slide, crank, and stops.

Having thus described my invention, I shall state my claims as follows:

1. A ballot-box constructed and arranged for operation substantially as shown and described—that is to say, so that no ballot can be deposited without an entire revolution of the crank, which operates successively a slide, a registering or numbering or canceling stamp, and a drop, substantially as herein shown and described.

2. The combination, in a ballot-box, of a horizontal but movable partition or drop with a canceling or registering or numbering stamp, the same being arranged, in connection with mechanism operated by crank, so that each operation of the stamp shall be followed by that of the drop, substantially as described.

3. The combination, with a ballot-box, of mechanism consisting of the following elements, viz: an alarm operated on starting the crank, a slide operated by the same crank to rise and fall after the alarm shall have been given, a canceling or numbering or registering stamp operated by the same crank after the slide shall have been closed, a table actuated by the same crank, to be dropped and raised again after the stamp shall have been operated, said mechanism being operated, as described, during one revolution of the crank, substantially as set forth.

4. In combination, in a ballot-box, with the mechanism for operating the alarm, the slide, the canceling, numbering, or registering stamp, and the drop by means of a crank, the spring-stops for arresting the crank at the end of each revolution, and after it shall have opened the slide for the reception of a ballot, substantially as shown and described.

5. The combination, in a ballot-box, of a slide, a canceling or registering stamp, and drop, all operated by a crank, as described, with a ratchet-wheel and pawl, or the mechanical equivalent of the same, to insure the rotation of the crank in but one direction, as and for the purposes set forth.

6. The combination, in a ballot-box, with the movable partition or drop, of an adjustable plate arranged in the rear of the box, horizontally opposite the slide and ballot-receiving opening, to arrest the ballot when in position to be stamped, as herein shown and set forth.

7. The combination with, and arrangement in, ballot-boxes constructed with internal counting or registering or canceling stamp, and other mechanism for dropping the canceled ballots into a receptacle and external crank, of a hinged table-flap, which may serve both to incase the crank which operates the internal mechanism and as a table upon which the ballots are deposited when cast.

8. The combination, with a ballot-box having a ballot-receiving opening in one of the vertical sides of a box, of a table upon which the ballot shall be deposited before it is passed into the box, substantially as shown and set forth.

In testimony whereof I have signed this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

STEUBEN T. BACON.

Witnesses:
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EWELL A. DICK.