

MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA
VIA TEN REGIONAL COMPENSATION P. R. SEATS,
(MAINLY TWO IN EACH OF FOUR LARGE
REGIONS) WITH NO PARTY LIST

Harold C. Daykin
#6, 13942 – 72nd Avenue
Surrey, British Columbia
V3W 0J8
604.597.6488

A Submission
To
The Citizens' Assembly
Dated
July 13, 2004

Includes:

Mixed Member Proportional for B. C. A Super-Lean P. R. Sector
With Ten Compensation Seats - 1996 Election

Allocation of Compensation P. R. Seats Using “Modified Sainte-Laguë Divisors”
After Two Plausible Levels of Ticket-Splitting (6 Regions)

- Interior Central
- Okanagan
- North of Fraser
- South of Fraser
- Vancouver Island
- West Lower Mainland

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*** Special Features

July 13, 2004

A. GOALS

- (1) To help bring about a **greater fairness**, in the translation of votes into seats;
- (2) While so doing, **not** to encourage a **large number of parties** with seats in the House;
- (3) To reduce the chances of **One-Person Rule**;
- *** (4) To increase the chances of having **voices in caucus** – both of major Government Parties and of Opposition Parties – from **each major region** of the province;
- (5) To reduce our current tendency towards **political and class polarization**¹;
- *** (6) As far as possible, let the local media in each Region announce local results that are final – not subject to central override. (Exception: see Section C 9.)

B. REQUIRED FRAMEWORK

This paper recognizes the requirement that any proposal **not** push our total number of seats in the House any higher than the normal Census-determined decade-by-decade increases.

C. PROPOSALS

- (1) That we move to a Mixed Member Proportional System;
- (2) That almost **one-eighth** of our M.L.A.'s be elected by proportional representation; for 2001, about ten members (out of 79 then);
- (3) That (2) be accomplished via the creation of **Regional Compensation Seats**;
- (4) For the purpose of (3), there be three types of Regions, defined by number of registered voters:
 - (a) **Large Regions** (**four** in number for the elections of 1996 and 2001) with generally a little over 400,000 registered voters; each entitled to **two** compensation P. R. Seats. For these elections, there would have been three such Regions within the Lower Mainland, and the whole of Vancouver Island would have been the fourth such Region.
 - (b) **Intermediate Regions** (only **two** for recent elections), having **one such seat**;
 - (c) **Small Regions** (three such for recent elections), see (8) below.
- (5) There be two ballots, the second one being a **Party Ballot**;
- *** (6) The method of determining **which party** has won a Regional Compensation Seat be via use of **Modified Sainte-Laguë Divisors** (votes divided by 1.4, 3, 5, 7, etc.);
- *** (7) That the awarded party's candidate for the P. R. seat be in declining order of his/her **percentage of the vote in the riding where he ran**, but lost. (Kent Weaver's² alternative suggestion from the federal scene); for simplicity, that party's **Top Loser** in the region's constituency races (**no party list**).
- (8) For three Small Regions, the "Alternate Vote", used in Australian House.
- (9) That there be a threshold of 5% of the Party Ballot votes of the whole Province for eligibility to the P. R. seats.

D. RATIONALE

- (1) The combination of four large Regions, with two P. R. members from each (and so on downward), together with use of Sainte-Laguë Divisors seems apt for producing, with limits:
 - (a) Much greater fairness for a major **party seats-deprived in the riding contest** (Cf. an analysis of the 1996 election, to come at hearings)
 - *** (b) Substantial improvement in the matter of **voices in caucus** within **each Region**;
 - (c) Modest improvement of small-party representation (cf. choice of Sainte-Laguë)
 - (d) From the Top-Loser proposal (No. 7 above), avoidance of the **ranked party list**, (a list would seem to raise rather than lower chances of One-Person Rule).

E. PRE-ADOPTION TESTING

- (1) Select History 12 classes or equivalent should be able to prove in September / October, 2004 whether:
 - (a) A morning of instruction and practice would be adequate for a Vancouver Island Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (or other Regional equivalent) to:
 - (b) Prepare and announce the Region's party-allocation of Compensation Seats (usually two such)
 - (c) Do same for the Allocated Parties' Top Losers who would hold those seats.
- (2) Use the accompanying "Modified Sainte-Laguë" regional worksheets for the 1996 and 2001 Elections as a resource for that purpose (minus the "ticket-splitting", of course, which was **only** involved for historical simulations of plausible voter behaviour if those elections had been held under a two ballot system).
- (3) As an aid to quick comfort level, advise all concerned that the "mathematics" involved is just the Arithmetic learned by Grade 6 (dividing by 1.4).

Notes:

1. For the opposite, see Kanter, Rosabeth, *World Class*, 1995, pp. 365 ff; also Finer, S. E., *Adversary Politics*, 1975.
2. See CJPS, September, 1997, p. 491