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July 20, 2004

Dr. J. Blaney, Chairperson  
Citizens' Assembly on Election Reform  
2288 - 555 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V6B 4N6

Dear Dr. Blaney:

You and the Citizens' Assembly have to be congratulated for the important work you are doing on behalf of the people of British Columbia.

I write to express my concern about the first-past-the-post system of voting, in which candidates get elected with a plurality of the votes and not a majority. When there are multiple candidates running in a constituency, for instance four candidates, it is possible for a candidate to win with 26% to 28% of the vote. It seems to me that a superior system of voting which indicates support from a larger number of voters is the preferential ballot, where candidates are ranked 1, 2, 3, 4 and the ballots are counted one ranking at a time until a candidate gets 51% of the votes with multiple rankings.

It is my understanding that the preferential ballot is used in Australia in the federal election, and it was used once in British Columbia under Premier WAC Bennett.

My main concern with proportional representation is that the voter is burdened with a list of names (party hacks) selected by the party. One solution would be for the list to be broken down by region and for the voters in that region to rank order the names on the list. The proportional representation results would then determine the number of members elected from the list, with those ranking highest being selected first region by region.

Once again I thank you, and wish you continued success with your work on behalf of the citizens of British Columbia.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Stanley A. Perkins  
Professor Emeritus  
The University of British Columbia