

MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL VOTING FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Proposal by Peter L. Arcus

ABSTRACT

This submission presents a comprehensive proposal for electing the members of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly by a method known as Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting.

Under this proposal each voter would have two votes: one vote for a constituency seat and one vote for a party. The composition of the Legislative Assembly so elected would be determined by the combination of the votes cast in each constituency and for the parties on a province-wide basis.

There would be forty constituency seats and thirty-nine party list seats. The constituency seats would be regional or local seats. These seats would provide for the election of regional or local representatives to the Legislative Assembly. The other thirty-nine seats would be assigned to candidates elected from party lists based on the outcome of the second, popular (or party), vote. Party lists would be determined by the parties contesting the election. It is anticipated that the parties would order their lists so that minorities and other interests of the voters would be accommodated, thus attracting voters to that party in the party vote.

The forty constituency seats would each be allocated to the candidate in each constituency polling the greatest number of votes in that constituency. Party list seats would be allocated so that the total number of seats held by each party in the Legislative Assembly would reflect the proportion of votes obtained by each party, above the threshold, in the party vote.

There would be a party vote threshold of enough votes to win one seat, $1/79$ or 1.27 percent of all the votes for parties, for each party to qualify to receive any party list seats.

This proposal retains the direct link between constituencies and "their" members (representatives) in the Legislative Assembly. It adds a much greater degree of proportionality among the parties in the Legislative Assembly.

It may give rise to minority and/or coalition governments but these possibilities are regarded as positive developments as they incorporate more parties in the government and are likely to reduce the wide swings in policies between successive governments. A more consensual type of government is anticipated.

Vancouver, B.C.

June 2004