

From J R H.

To The Citizens' Assembly On Electoral Reform.

Page 1 of 3

"Human consciousness was made for sharing ideas."
Daniel C. Dennett, Freedom Evolves.

My greetings to you and my thanks for your commitment to this undertaking on our behalves.

The sole significant drawback I see in our present plurality electoral system is the lack of correlation between a party's popular vote and that party's seats won. This leads to a feeling of disenfranchisement for many and creates a huge obstacle for new parties with new ideas to elect members and present their ideas more effectively to the populace. Governments get press; political parties without Members get ignore.

This drawback can be overcome with a proportional representation electoral system. It is your task to decide whether we change our electoral system and just how. Still, I would offer the following thoughts.

I see no reason to change our general elections up to the point of the local Returning Officers tallying the votes. Maintaining our present system to that stage preserves the desirable effects of this system: simplicity of balloting - one-man,

one ballot, one X; a largish number of ridings which ease problems of local differences and geographically overly large ridings; the principle of each Member representing a specific geographic area and its populace, i.e., constituent responsibility.

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) would determine the number of seats each party wins. There should be a threshold percentage of the popular vote below which no party wins a seat. All independent candidates should be considered together as a single party for this purpose. The percentage of seats each party wins should correspond as closely as practicable to the percentage of the popular vote, minus the votes gained by the parties below the threshold, each party gained.

The CEO would then determine the vote percentage of each candidate within the ridings and list those candidates from highest to lowest percentage for each separate party.

Then the CEO would declare Members elected, working with those party lists from the top down and starting with the party with fewest seats. (I suggest this so the smaller parties might have strong Members in the Legislative Assembly.) As each Member is declared other candidates' names from the relevant riding would be removed from their respective party lists.

From J. L. G

Page 3 of 3

Thus a proportional representation could be achieved while retaining much that is desirable in our present electoral system and avoiding a two ballot system, a reduced number of ridings. Members who did not campaign, and party lists of political friends and "back room boys."

Byelections could be decided by a preferential ballot or, as now, by a plurality vote.

I do not consider the above proposal to reflect an ideal. Indeed the devil is in the details, but I think we would gain much more than we would lose with my proposed system.

I understand you are not to express your own ideas on electoral reform until you submit your report in mid December. However, I am open to questions - general or specific.

Once again, thank you.

J. L. Gentry


J. L. GENTRY

11633 BURNETT ST.
MAPLE RIDGE V2X 6P3

TEL. (HOME) 604-463-4375

TEL. AND FAX (SHOP) 604-467-4913