

**Supplementary submissions by Bryan Schwartz:
September 7, 2004**

Additional thoughts on selecting PR members:

Select the PR member from among those who have run directly for office, based on the support they received at the polls, rather than leaving the choice to party lists.

I have previously proposed to the Assembly "PR light" - keeping the existing system for the most part, but having about 20% PR compensation seats. My book on this topic, VALUING CANADIANS, previously available in PDF format, has now been published in hardcopy version, and is available by contacting Maria_tepper@umanitoba.ca.

My main purpose in writing this follow-up note is to propose a few additional thoughts related to the specific manner in which PR members are chosen.

In my earlier writings, I have proposed that the 20% PR seats could be selected from party lists. I have also suggested, however, that there should be limits on the ability of a PR member so selected to repeatedly serve in the legislature without direct election or to serve in the cabinet. Facing the voters directly is important.

Here is another way to honour the principle that members of the legislature should have to engage directly with voters during an election. (I believe I have heard this mentioned by others in the various debates I have read over the years):

For PR purposes, the province would be divided into regions. Compensation PR seats in a region would be assigned to the candidates of the party who did not finish first, but who still ran for direct election. Priority would be based on which candidates of a party won the most votes compared to other initially unsuccessful candidates of the same party;

Example: suppose there was a ten seat region, and two candidates of the Summer Party win direct election by finishing first in their riding. PR principles assign a third, compensation, seat to the Summer Party. The seat would automatically go to the candidate - among the eight who failed to achieve direct election - who received the highest number of votes at the polls.

(Ridings often vary considerably in the number of persons eligible to vote, so it might be argued that priority for PR seats should be based on the percentage of votes a candidate won, not the absolute number. I do not favour this approach, as it could mean the election of a candidate who won thousands of votes fewer than other candidates from the same party).

The idea just mentioned would be very easy to administer and would restrict membership in the legislature to persons who have directly run for office, rather than possibly vesting power in the hands of party leaders.

I would also like to propose for your consideration a possible variation on this idea .

Suppose that the PR members are indeed chosen from among those members of a party who actually ran for office in a particular region. But the choice would be made by a caucus of the members of the party who ran for office in that region but were not directly elected.

Only members of the caucus itself would be eligible for selection. Each caucus member's voting power would be weighted in accordance with the number of votes he or she received at the polls. If candidate A received 2,500, she would 2,500 votes in the caucus. If candidate B received only 1000 votes, he would have 1000 vote in the caucus. This idea would value the vote of those who supported the party in each and every constituency.

In the Summer Party example given above, the eight unsuccessful candidates would meet and select which one of them enters the Legislature based on this weighted voted system.

I like this variant in theory. It reflects the principle that every vote in every riding

should, to the maximum extent possible, make a difference. The regional PR candidates would tend to have more legitimacy in terms of representing the whole region, as a regional caucus would select them, not just the voters in one particular riding.

But as I have argued elsewhere, simplicity and ease of implementation should be important factors, so the first idea - “most popular unsuccessful candidate” - is probably the best at this stage of developments.

To sum up:

With respect to filling “compensation PR” seats:

- **The “most popular unsuccessful candidate” idea has the considerable merit of being very simple and easy to apply;**
- **The variant I have suggested for possible consideration (i.e, a caucus of initially unsuccessful candidates from the region makes the choice) is more consistent with the philosophy of valuing each and every vote in each and every constituency. It would also make the PR members appear more genuinely regional, rather than the product of one particular riding.**

Both ideas have the very considerable merit of putting less power in the hands of parties, as opposed to voters, and in ensuring that every member of the legislature has had to engage directly with the voters during an election.

Let me conclude at this stage by saying it was an honour for me to appear at your hearings in Victoria, and I look forward to seeing the results of your deliberations.

Bryan Schwartz