

*Ray Jones*

Kamloops, B. C.

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Special Committee on Electoral Reform  
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street  
House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Committee,

Minister Monsef suggested I send my comments directly to the Committee.

The way we are doing politics is killing politics. And, it is bringing out the worst in us. Voters have disengaged from the political process. There are six persuasive explanations: (*The Power Report* from Great Britain, 2005.)

- Voters feel they do not have enough influence over political decisions,
- The political parties are too similar and lack principle,
- The voting system leads to wasted and unequal votes,
- Parties require voters to commit to a platform which is too broad,
- There is a lack of information and knowledge about politics, and
- Voting procedures are inconvenient and unattractive.

Powerful voices have the media give voters selected truth, filtered truth, half truth, untruth, and truthiness, to keep voters compliant and complacent. Fear (false evidence appearing real) is used to scare voters away from true change.

I am of the opinion most voters are unaware of there being anything wrong with our democracy. Oh, voters know results are usually personally disappointing, but not why. Politicians are usually mum about what ails our political system.

If voters are not re-engaged in democracy, we will see these consequences:

- The weakening of the mandate and legitimacy for elected governments,
- The further weakening of political equality,
- The weakening of effective dialogue between governed and governors,
- The weakening of effective recruitment into politics,
- The rise of undemocratic political forces,
- The rise of a 'quite authoritarianism' within government. (*The Power Report*)

Some of these changes are already evident.

How does one counter blatant lies?

First, explain the inadequacies of the present system to voters. "Our dreams don't match your ballots." (*The Take*, NFD Production, shown on Knowledge Network, Sept. 10/13)

Currently, some print media scribes mention 'dysfunction'. Voters need an explanation of how and why the 'dysfunction' of FPTP is detrimental to our democracy. Voters need an explanation of how

the status quo frustrates their dreams.

Second, convince voters they can do something. I read an article about a mayoral election race in Moscow. Candidate Alexei Novak summarized voter's opinion as, "Well, you're saying all the correct things, but we can't change any of this." To that belief of voters, Novak responded, "I want to ask for one thing: a little bit of belief in yourselves." ('Two Russians Meet in Moscow's Mayor's Race', Joshua Yaffa, Ilya Arkhipova and Stepan Kravchenko, *Bloomberg Business Week*, Aug 26-Sept. 1, 2013.)

Voters need accurate information to learn, and then be encouraged they can do something, such as tell their family and friends and write to their Member of Parliament.

Much of politics is about the math. There is a difference between  $40+60=100$  and  $40+40=80$ . The challenge for supporters of FPTP is electoral reform has the potential to empower the voters, creating activist and involved voters, which will take away easy access to total power and forcing supporters of FPTP to learn new math and learn how to (horrors) cooperate.

Third, since the media claims to "report the news, not make the news", the Prime Minister, Minister Monsef, front benchers and all members of the Committee must ensure the media has plenty to report on the topic of reform. If MP Elizabeth May is willing, and the Committee is in agreement, let Ms. May carry the torch for reform.

As an alumnus of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, I warn, there will be 'powerful voices against change' (Gordon Gibson, BCCAER). Suggestion of electoral reform is war. Queensbury Rules do not apply. And the first casualty is the truth. A confused electorate will reject change. Even without a referendum, the voters need to be onside with the electoral change.

The challenge is, How can supporters of reform get out the message without the support from the media? I suggest: First, a slogan, *Power to the People*; Second, a theme song, *The Maple Leaf Forever*, performed by combined brass and pipe bands (sometimes other types of musical production); Third, a solution for presenting the pro-reform message, independent of the established media; Fourth, **the media must be directly challenged** about their claims and sources of information; Fifth, an immediate explanation of the selection of the Committee and the deliberations and choice of the Committee.

Looking back on my Assembly experience, there were two comments from voters which I distinctly remember, "I am not sure it (STV) will make a difference" and "It's all smoke and mirrors". Both comments indicate unconvinced and confused voters, being both uninformed and misinformed.

I lived in Vancouver at the time of the 1984 Federal election and voted for Pat Carney. As a now senior citizen, my memory is that was the only time I voted for a winner. Great legacy for FPTP: Vote for a winner, once in your life! The rest of the time, feel like a fool!

I want a better system! So, please, do not let electoral reform 'fizzle'. (*Maclean's*, October 3, 2016, 'Trudeau's vote fixer'.)

Sincerely yours,

Ray Jones