

Smithers, B.C.

2016-10-02

Special Committee on Electoral Reform

Ottawa

Dear Committee members:

I have never engaged in such consultations before but I do believe that the electoral reform proposed is so important that I must make a submission. From reading your website, it is clear that you have ample theoretical information on various alternative electoral systems. Similarly, the guiding principles reduce your choices somewhat, with particular reference to the need for local representation.

I was a randomly selected member of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. I won't ramble on about detailed system options. The one thing that stuck with me from four months of lectures on alternative systems was this remark by one of the political scientists. He said, "you don't know how any system will actually work in any country until it is tried." He went on, at length, giving examples of how the same system generates minority governments in one country and majority governments in others because of the political culture of each. We must be careful in this decision.

Our Dominion is vast. We lack a single language, a single religion, and a single culture. Our "two solitudes" have expanded into many potential solitudes such as urban-rural, the six geographic regions with conflicting economic drives, a multiplicity of cultures, thirteen provincial/territorial governments, and the un-reconciled aboriginal/colonialist stress.

The centrifugal forces are immense. A central government weakened by the presence of several single issue or limited issue parties with parochial interests would limit the ability of the Federal government to develop any national program. Accordingly, I must suggest that if a change is inevitable the new system should be one that encourages parties to appeal to as broad a base of support as possible.

Therefore, I suggest that a majoritarian system that requires the candidate to be moderate as possible in order to be a majority of the voters' second or third choice is preferable. That would be a single ballot alternate vote (AV) system,

Such a system meets the following guidelines of your committee.

- 1] It maintains the integrity of the voting system;
- 2] It should restore the legitimacy of the voting system;
- 3] It should support more engagement by the voters;
- 4] It is inclusive and not complex.
- 5] It allows local representation within the current riding boundaries.

Thank you for your attention,

William F.M. Jackson