

Don't Eat That Ballot!
**Prospects for Electoral Reform in Canada and
Potential Lessons for the U.S.**

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In November, 2004, a young Canadian voter ate her ballot (boiled in chocolate sauce) at a polling station during Alberta's provincial legislative elections. She was protesting what she saw as lack of opportunities for citizen involvement in Alberta's political parties and in the political process in general. During the 2000 federal election, three Albertans had been charged with violating the Elections Act for consuming their ballots, and prior to last summer's federal elections, Elections Canada posted a warning on its web site as to the illegality of eating ballots, which are defined as official government documents.¹

Clearly, electoral reform is a salient issue for at least a handful of Canadians, but does it have any broader significance at the provincial or even the federal levels? Canada, like the United States, has used the same electoral system—variously called "winner take all," Single Member Plurality or First Past the Post for elections to national and provincial legislatures since its creation, and despite sporadic outbursts of criticism by academics, several studies by government-appointed commissions—and occasional eating of ballots—electoral system reform has historically not been an issue that resonates with the public. In this sense too, Canada resembles the United States where, apart from a passive lack of enthusiasm for the electoral college, the citizenry seems to take the system for granted as the way elections happen.

However, Canada and the US are part of a shrinking number of democracies using "First Past the Post" (hereafter referred to as FPTP), raising the questions of why this is the case and whether change is on the horizon. This paper is an initial and preliminary assessment of twenty-first century efforts at electoral reform in Canada where the momentum appears to be growing for significant change, with a brief discussion of possible lessons and implications for the United States. This is not the first time the wheels of electoral change have started turning in Canada but previously they have always ground to a halt, so we are interested in the questions:

1. Why is there a movement for change? Is this an irrational bandwagon effect or are there serious factors pointing toward a need for change?
2. What venues and vehicles may bring about change? In particular, what is the role of federalism? And what types of groups and processes are being employed as change agents?
3. What seem likely replacements for Canada's single member plurality system?
4. What lessons can be drawn by Americans about electoral systems and representation?

Although our range of interest includes all of Canada at the national and provincial levels, the center of our emphasis in this paper is British Columbia where a remarkable process of civic engagement has been underway that may turn into the epicenter of electoral change of seismic proportions for Canada or, conversely, leave only a ripple in the footnotes of history. The developments in British Columbia are particularly interesting because they appear to be producing a thrust for change from a British-style party-discipline model to a candidate-centered, constituency-focused system. Extensive citizen involvement in this process lends it a certain heart-warming aura for democratic idealists, but the encounter which seems to be developing with the inherent trade-offs and paradoxes of electoral systems is no less dramatic for that.

The trade-offs include the tension between stability and the representation of minority interests,² and the incompatibility of consensual politics and district loyalty on one hand with party discipline and systematically organized policy-making on the other.³ Such trade-offs are in turn part of a larger set of issues related to the fundamental consolidative and integrative function of government — i.e., the drawing together of interests in support of policy. Both intellectual analysis of electoral systems and political haggling over their design often seems to ignore this larger set of issues. Interest seems to be focused on such issues as the demographic and social composition of legislatures and constituency control of representatives, to the neglect of interfaces with the societal interests and institutions that also shape policy. The choices made with regard to electoral systems in British Columbia and the rest of Canada will necessarily entail choices and trade-offs and have implications for integrative policy-making, and it is not clear yet how integrative policy-making will be affected.

Election Systems

We shall begin with a very brief overview of a very complex topic—the general families of election systems—and a discussion of the values that underlie system choices, and then turn our attention to why movements for electoral system change develop, before looking more specifically at the Canadian experience.

Electoral systems typically divide into single member plurality, single member majority, proportional, and semi-proportional systems. Each has its supporters and detractors and its strengths and weaknesses, and each has historical and geographical roots. FPTP systems come out of the British tradition. They are based on the simple premise that whoever gets the most votes should win. Since this can result in more people voting against than for the winner, single member majority systems were developed to guarantee a clear majority victory. These include run-off elections if no one receives a majority on the first ballot, as are currently used in France, or "instant run-off" systems which avoid a second ballot by using a ranking system to arrive at a majority victor.

Proportional representation (PR) systems were the creation of continental European democracies and have a great many variations. All are based on the value of proportionality—the assumption that parties should be represented in a legislature more or less according to the strength they exhibit at the polls.

Recognizing weaknesses in all these electoral systems, various efforts have been made to wed two types together in an effort to get the best of both worlds. Best known and most imitated has been the "mixed" system or MMP (mixed member proportional) used in Germany since the creation of the German Federated Republic in 1949. In an MMP system, voters choose representatives in single-member constituencies to fill a portion of the legislature and also vote for party lists to determine proportionality and fill remaining seats. This system appears to be gaining supporters worldwide because it maintains the attractiveness of a constituency-representative relationship, protects proportionality, and—probably the key reason for its creation—allows multiparty representation while winnowing down the number of competitive parties and weeding out small often extremist and obstructionist "splinter parties."

A second sort of compromise is sought through the single transferable vote (or STV) system which creates small (typically two to seven representatives) multi-member constituencies, allows for some proportionality, and gives voters some choice among parties as well as candidates. The prototype of this system is Ireland where STV has been used since 1922.⁴

Although students of electoral systems seem to lean towards becoming advocates of one type or another, most will admit that the choice of an electoral system is based on value preferences and there is no one perfect system that can deliver all desirable outcomes.

Values often mentioned as desirable outcomes in electoral systems include simplicity, fair representation whether based on equality of individuals or on inclusiveness based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic class, legitimacy, stability, majority rule, a voice for minority viewpoints, federal or other regional and geographical considerations, protection and promotion of a two-party system or, conversely, a multiparty system, marginalization of extremist parties, clear lines of accountability to constituents and practicality in such matters as ease and cost of elections.⁵

A value often discussed by critics of FPTP is the avoidance of "wasted votes." Whether there even is such a phenomenon, however, is a matter of opinion. Votes are defined as "wasted" if they do not contribute to electing a candidate. Thus in a two-person race, votes for the loser are "wasted"; in a three person race, there may be more "wasted votes" than winning votes; in the US electoral college system, votes for any candidates who do not receive a state's electoral votes are "wasted." To detractors of the "wasted vote" argument this is somewhat akin to saying that in a basketball game, all points scored by the losing team were wasted and made no contribution to the game. The difference however is that basketball is about winning and losing, while elections are about representation. With that in mind, advocates of systems based on proportionality argue that any system that distributes votes based to any degree on the strength shown by a party at the polls is preferable to one that does not, and that the votes and preferences of as many voters as possible should play a role in choosing legislators and, in a parliamentary system, a government.

A contrasting pair of values that underlie some representational choices involves community or collectivist values versus individualist values, with PR systems reflecting the former and FPTP and its variants reflecting the latter. In Canada, some aboriginal communities have opted for non-partisan elections and consensual decision-making as a way to preserve what are described as traditional values of their communities.⁶

Finally, to some, the operative value may simply be tradition—which itself can acquire a irrational sacrosanct or even jingoistic characteristic—sometimes expressed in the U.S., for example, in the view that PR is not an option because it would make the U.S. more like western Europe. However, tradition is also defended by the very pragmatic approach of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

A different sort of value underlying electoral systems involves the source and process by which the system took shape. Canadian political scientist John Courtney describes the electoral process as a "procedural building block" of representation. In other words, representation is not just about the "end product" produced by lawmakers.⁷ Creation or change of an electoral system that involves a high degree of citizen input may bestow a higher degree legitimacy and thus a potentially greater level of acceptance of the system regardless of its success in delivering desired values or the partisan victories or policy outcomes that follow its implementation. Conversely, change that appears party-motivated and deliberately calculated to favor some groups over others may find less long term acceptance.

Arguments for change vary according to the country and situation involved but in general they are based on different sets of values—those changing from FPTP are seeking more proportionality; those changing from pure PR systems are seeking either more stability or more direct constituency-representative ties. Some are aimed at tackling—or at least giving the appearance of tackling— broader and more abstract issues like loss of faith in democracy without a clear notion as to whether such change would be purely cosmetic or would have the capability to address root concerns.

Recent pressures for change worldwide have generally focused on the value of proportionality as a fairness issue, a vehicle for increasing opportunities for women and minorities to hold elective office, and a way of increasing voter turnout, the assumption being that people do not bother to vote if they know their vote is likely to be "wasted." Internationally, the 1990s were marked by much discussion of the various attributes of electoral systems, in part because of the large number of emerging democracies in the former Communist world. Additionally 1993 was a watershed year for electoral reform, with Japan, New Zealand, and Italy all adopting new systems at that time.

The United States, Canada, and the UK are the remaining democracies today that use only FPTP in national legislative elections. For Canada and the UK, as parliamentary systems, FPTP by determining the legislative make-up also determines, in effect, who the prime minister will be. In the US, FPTP is the mechanism used internally within states for determining who will win a state's electoral votes for President. Additionally, in the US, governors are generally elected by FPTP, and FPTP is used as well to elect provincial assemblies (and thus provincial premiers) in Canada, making Canada the only country among British-style parliamentary systems to use FPTP for both national and regional elections. In the UK itself, elections to the recently-created Scottish and Welsh assemblies use variants of PR, and PR is used for elections to the European Union. (In 1997, the Jenkins Commission set up by the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties, proposed an "Alternative Vote Plus" system for the UK that would preserve many qualities of FPTP but add more proportionality. The promised referendum on whether to adopt such a system has yet to be held, however.)⁸

FPTP receives both blame and praise for encouraging and perpetuating a two-party system. While two-party politics are clearly the norm in the U.S., this might appear to be less true in Canada where third parties have made significantly more inroads. However, the presence of third parties is more a result of the nature of Canadian regionalism and the fact that third parties with regional concentrations of votes can win seats in an FPTP system. In this sense, FPTP is criticized for structurally discriminating against small nationally based parties as compared to small regionally based parties or, put in another way, to favor geographically based parties over interest-based parties such as the Greens. In parliamentary systems, FPTP has also proven capable of producing majority governments with an overall plurality of popular votes. FPTP is said to discriminate against women and minorities because parties in order to maximize their chances of winning the one seat in a district are less likely to put a woman or minority on the ballot if they perceive this as an obstacle to victory. And finally, the "wasted vote" phenomenon discussed above plays a large role in the indictment of FPTP.⁹

In Canada, the standard arguments against FPTP have been joined by other considerations more specific to that country. For example, geographical mobility has been offered in Canada as a justification for abandoning FPTP, the argument being that as people move more frequently the strong constituency-representative ties of yesteryear are gone, and many people today do not even know who their representative is.¹⁰

Another argument which has had particular relevance to Canada based on recent election results is the need to have a broader spectrum of views represented in the legislature. When elections return a particularly lopsided majority and shut out smaller parties entirely, the line of reasoning goes that whole sets of issues are excluded entirely from parliamentary debates.¹¹

Regionalism and the quest for "Canadian identity" seem to continually be near the top the charts of Canadian political discussion because of both geographical and demographic features that encourage divisiveness and separateness or even, in the case of Quebec and some in the western provinces, separatism.¹² Under FPTP, parties with concentrated support in one region fare much better than parties of equivalent strength but distributed nationally. Several recent elections to Canada's House of Commons produced what were called "pizza parliaments"

or "rainbow parliaments" because they produced a spectrum of parties, each concentrated in one geographical region. The Bloc Quebecois does not even run candidates for national elections outside Quebec; yet it currently is the third largest party in the House of Commons with 54 (17.5%) of the seats.¹³

An argument in support of being open to change is that alternative voting systems are not so foreign to voters as they might believe. Most voters probably have had some familiarity with a variety of voting systems either through participation in local elections, elections within unions or other membership organizations, or internal elections for leadership positions within political parties.¹⁴

Supporters of FPTP base their arguments on its simplicity, familiarity and tradition, clear lines of responsibility between a legislator and a constituency, a known voice and place for registering discontent, and a clear winner. On the latter score, FPTP advocates point out that even if a candidate wins a FPTP election with only a plurality of the votes, he or she has still won more votes than the candidate of any other party. In a parliamentary system, FPTP is praised for its ability to produce stable majority governments (although Canada is currently an exception to this rule, with a minority government in Ottawa, and has been a number of times in the past). A final argument is that "the system works"—FPTP governments have been successful in solving problems, facing crises, and providing basic government functions.

Electoral Reform in Canada

As recently as the 1990s, electoral reform was considered to be a non-issue nationally in Canada even though academics and media pundits had long lamented Canada's adherence to FPTP and various commissions had been created in years past to consider a possible change. For example, commissions established in 1979 and 1985 to address issues of regionalism both pointed to the voting system as contributing to the regional power imbalance in Cabinets and parliamentary party caucuses at the national level. The Trudeau government in the 1980s proposed and then backed away from a parliamentary committee to examine other electoral systems.¹⁵ The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Lortie Commission), created in 1989, studied and made many recommendations about the electoral process and party financing, but decided from the start that FPTP was not open for debate.¹⁶

At the provincial level, there has been a long, checkered history of interest, and several experiments, in electoral reform. These all proved short-lived and followed a similar pattern: a particular party would promote a voting system because of its ability to enhance the party's power but once the party became entrenched it soon discovered that its long term interests lay in reverting back to FPTP.¹⁷

The Lortie Commission found public ambivalence toward electoral system change and relative satisfaction with the status quo despite repeated efforts by some academics and journalists to keep the issue of reform alive. John Courtney, as late as 2002, wrote that the "ripe moment" for change had not arrived. Such a moment would require the confluence of not just academic and sustained public support but support of political and governing elites. He believed agreement on an alternative would help, preferably an alternative recommended by a trusted source such as a royal commission. While he thought federalism, on the one hand, could be a disincentive to change, in that parties marginalized at the national level could thrive at the provincial level and vice versa, he was open to the possibility that if one province dared to change—and if the change was successful—others might follow.¹⁸

However, it is possible that even while Courtney was writing these words, the "ripe moment" had arrived. Throughout the 1990s, there was increasing talk about Canada being in the grip of what was variously called a "democratic deficit" or a "democratic malaise," evidenced by decreasing trust in government and decreasing voter turnout.¹⁹ Possible reasons

given for this phenomenon are the disconnect between Canada's increasing diversity and its political leaders, the limiting effects of globalization on the ability of government to solve social and economic ills, and the role of new technologies in reshaping how people communicate about and with government.²⁰ (It should be noted that low voter turnout and decreasing trust in government are global phenomena; it is not clear that the reasons and thus the solutions are similarly global.)

For many decades, Canada could claim rather routine two party government with alternating rule between two major parties, the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives, with the New Democratic Party as a solid third party, However, the 1990s produced particularly skewed elections and an array of new parties. In 1993, the Liberal Party won 177 seats in the then-295 seat House of Commons, a clear majority but with only 41.3% of the popular vote. In contrast, the Progressive Conservatives were reduced from their previous majority of 169 seats to a mere two seats, with 16% of the vote, while the NDP dropped from 43 seats to nine. Two newcomers, the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party received respectively 54 and 52 seats with 13% and 19% of the popular vote, the reason being that both parties claimed regional concentrations of support. A similar if less dramatic pattern occurred in 1997. To give one example, the Progressive Conservatives won 20 seats with 19% of the vote while the Reform won 60 seats with roughly the same percentage of votes.²¹ (By 2000 the Reform party had become the Canadian Alliance, and a more recent merger with the PCs has created the Conservative party.) Clearly this was not business as usual and calls for reform increased in volume.

The aforementioned worldwide trends lead to the possibility of "policy contagion". There was particular attention among academics and electoral reform activists to the New Zealand case. As a fellow Commonwealth country with some similar issues concerning involvement of the aboriginal population, its decision to adopt MMP attracted Canadian interest, even though arguments could be made that the two countries have more differences than similarities.

The "reputable commission" to which Courtney looked as a change agent made its appearance in the form of the Law Commission of Canada. This is an independent federal body established in 1997 to study and recommend changes in Canada's laws and legal institutions, in an effort to root out the causes of "democratic malaise." It serves Parliament in an advisory capacity and is accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Justice. In its efforts to address causes of "civic disengagement," it undertook a major project in electoral reform in 2001. Part of this project aimed at stimulating dialogue through publication of a discussion paper, "Renewing Democracy: Debating Electoral Reform: Canada." Unlike much of the academic literature on electoral reform peppered with arcane analyses of mathematical formulas, the Law Commission's 47-page paper is thorough, clear, objective, simple without being simplistic, thorough, and well-documented. It was intended to launch a national discussion and did prompt some public meetings and written submissions as well as being assigned reading in some political science classes. The Law Commission's exploration of electoral reform culminated in the release of a report presented to Parliament in March, 2004, in which the Law Commission recommended the adoption of MMP for Canadian national elections.²²

Larry Gordon added another possible stimulus for change—election of a minority government in Ottawa²³— which came to pass in the June, 2004, elections. This current Liberal government promised to address the Law Commission's report but has not done so yet. However, a challenge to the federal electoral system is also underway on another front. Ever since the addition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to Canada's Constitution in 1982, the Courts have played a heightened role in addressing rights issues, and there has been a case pending since 2001, brought by the Green party and its former leader, with the support of the Constitutional Test Case Centre of University of Toronto, challenging FPTP on the basis of violations of Charter guarantees of voting rights and the right of equality.²⁴

The Reform Movement in British Columbia

However, the most potent change agent currently may be the one Courtney was uncertain about—change by one province and the chance of "policy contagion" at the provincial level. The first possible contender for this honor is British Columbia. British Columbia is a product of the populist sentiments which drifted north from the U.S. to color the politics of western Canada. BC populism has been described as including a belief in the virtue of the common folk along with their right to be consulted by government and to be involved in policy matters, a "deep and often passionate" distrust of political parties, and a dislike of big government. It is not the populism of the poor and downtrodden but of those, including the wealthy, who for whatever reason feel powerless before the political system. (It is not the same but is related to the much discussed "western alienation" that colors attitudes in the western provinces toward Ottawa.)²⁵

BC's desire to curb the power of political parties is manifested for example in the fact that BC is the only Canadian province to provide for recall elections of elected government officials.²⁶ At the same time, BC parties tend to come and go, change names, and align with or split from other parties. Currently there are five parties that might be considered serious contenders for seats under a voting system other than FPTP.

British Columbia had departed from FPTP during several short-lived experiments in the past with other voting systems, but each time came back to the familiar.²⁷ The issue of change reappeared in the 1990s as FPTP once again showed its quirky potential in BC's 1996 elections to its Legislative Assembly. In that year the New Democratic Party received six more seats than the BC Liberals to become the governing party, despite receiving 37,534 fewer votes,²⁸ putting them in a frame of mind to be responsive to suggestions for change.

At about the same time an advocacy group known as ECCO-BC was formed to lobby the government to hold a referendum on electoral change and to inform the public as to the range of options. ECCO-BC could boast representation from parties and organizations across the political spectrum although neither of the two major parties (Liberals or New Democrat Party) were included. However, the Liberal leadership voiced support and the NDP later came on board—meaning that ECCO's goals had the support of all BC parties.²⁹ A parallel group, Fair Voting BC formed as a citizens' advocacy group for electoral reform and an ad hoc grouping of four former MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) that cut across party lines both proposed creation of a citizens' assembly to assess the functioning of BC government, including its electoral systems.

The Liberal Party recouped its 1996 losses by an extremely lopsided victory in 2001, in which Liberals won 77 seats (97%) based on 57.6% of the popular vote. The New Democratic Party (NDP) won only two seats although they received 21.5 % of the vote. Other parties lost out entirely, although the Greens won 12% of the popular vote and the Unity Party and Marijuana Party each received over 3% (not enough to win seats under the German MMP list with a 5% threshold but sufficient in Israel with a 1.5% threshold).

Besides having to contend with skewed election results, BC also had its share of political scandals in the 1990s. Between 1991 and 1999, three premiers and one party leader were forced to resign over abuses of power involving money or sex. BC's current Liberal Premier, Gordon Campbell continued this scandal-prone tradition by getting arrested in Hawaii for drunk driving in 2003. Added to this was a sluggish economy and charges of gross financial misjudgment by the New Democratic Party.³⁰

In 2002, the Greens used BC's "Recall and Initiative Act" to begin a petition drive calling on the government to implement an MMP electoral system. The petition failed to get the

needed 250,000 signatures to force consideration of their proposal, at least in part because it appeared designed to narrowly serve the Green party agenda. However, it did help to hold the Liberals' feet to the fire in making good on a campaign promise. Also the initiative campaign, including a speaking tour of the province by one of the architects of New Zealand's new electoral system, helped to keep electoral reform on the front burner.³¹

The Citizens' Assembly

Part of the Liberal "New Era" platform presented in 1999 had included a promise to convene a Citizens' Assembly to explore electoral systems, hold public hearings, and recommend whether the current system should be changed. If they opted for change, a referendum would be held as part of the next general election. This was a novel undertaking for British Columbia, and for Canada in general. While similar concepts had been proposed earlier by various groups, none had been implemented. The philosophy underlying this idea was that "since all politicians were considered suspect on the subject of electoral reform, it was necessary to take them out of the process."³²

A legislative committee composed of six Liberals and one New Democrat was given the task of constructing the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, and this group appears to have gone to extraordinary lengths to construct a body that was broadly reflective of the province's populace and detached from partisan or governmental influences. Because Assembly members would be chosen from among registered voters, a voter registration drive kicked off the process. The hope was, in particular, to increase the number of 18–24 year-olds on the list.

The three-stage selection process was conducted by Elections BC, the non-partisan agency that supervises the province's elections, and began with invitations to a random sample of 15,800 registered voters to do something important for their province. Because of insufficient response in some districts, more names had to be added to the original sample, bringing the total receiving the initial letter to 23,034. Of the 1,715 who did respond, a second sample of 964 was invited to attend an informational meeting in their region. The mood of the attendees was reported to be one of excitement about the chance to participate, and there were even some tears among those who were not chosen in the third drawing to determine the membership of the Citizens' Assembly. Political scientist Norman Ruff noted that much of this excitement appeared to "stem from the opportunity for public participation and exercise of a civic responsibility rather than any particular zeal for electoral reform."³³

The Citizens' Assembly was composed of a male and female representative from each of the province's seventy-nine ridings. Two aboriginal representatives were added after it was determined that the random selection had not resulted in any First Nations representation. The addition of a Chair, Jack Blaney, appointed by the government brought the total to 161.³⁴

The Assembly was given a budget of \$5.5 million and a staff including a University of British Columbia political scientist as chief research officer. Assembly members were paid \$150 per day for each day the assembly was in session, plus reimbursement for expenses and child care.

The Citizens' Assembly's mission was to decide whether the present FPTP system should be replaced, and if so, to decide what should take its place. If they decided that change was warranted, the proposed change would be voted on in the next election for the Legislative Assembly scheduled for May 17, 2005. (Unlike the tradition of variable election dates in parliamentary systems, BC has recently adopted fixed election dates of the third Tuesday in May every four years.) To pass, a referendum would have to be approved by a supermajority of 60% overall plus approval in 60% of the ridings. Although skeptics suggested that this was a way of preventing a change, it was defended as a "standard municipal government practice."³⁵

The Citizens' Assembly met in the Wosk Center for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University, and the sessions were designed and conducted by two political scientists from University of British Columbia. UBC political science graduate students were used as discussion group facilitators. The eleven-month process began with a Learning Phase lasting for six weekends in early 2004. During this time, staff and academics laid out possible criteria for evaluating electoral systems and walked the Assembly through the range of possible systems. Assembly members received a reading list and were provided copies of David Farrell's book, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*.³⁶ Farrell (from the UK) and a political scientist from New Zealand led one of the weekend sessions. Assembly members also received training in preparation for the deliberative phase of the process and developed a set of shared values and policies. This phase wrapped up with the publication of a "Preliminary Report to the People of British Columbia" explaining the Assembly's value choices and providing a frame of reference for the "Public Hearings" phase.

The public were invited to provide input in writing, on the web, or in person. Fifty public hearings were held throughout the province with panels of Citizens' Assembly members, each including residents from the region in which it was held and from other parts of the province. Written submissions were also solicited, and over 1600 were received from some 1400 different individuals. Of these, eighty were four pages or longer. All were posted on the Assembly's web site, allowing a dialogue to develop in which some postings responded to earlier postings as well as to the Assembly itself. Not surprisingly, members of the public who spoke at the hearings or made written submissions weighed in heavily on the side of change, though not all in the same direction.

The "Deliberation Phase" began in September, 2004, with visits to the Assembly by nine individuals who had made particularly thoughtful presentations at the summer's public hearings, and with a review of material covered in the Learning Phase. The Assembly then discussed what they had learned within the framework of three values they had agreed to be most essential for British Columbia—proportionality, voter choice, and constituency representation. The Assembly narrowed its choices to two—mixed member proportional (MMP) and single transferable vote (STV), and considered in detail how each would work in BC and what its effects might be. Of these two, they ultimately settled by a vote of 123 to 31, on a version of STV that was "customized" for BC and would later become labeled BC-STV. (BC-STV was conceived to accommodate the more sparsely populated areas of northern British Columbia as well as its high density urban areas by creating multimember districts with representation ranging from two to seven MLAs depending on location.) Finally, the Citizens' Assembly reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of FPTP and how STV would compare in the results it was likely to produce, and then held two key votes. The first on whether to retain FPTP in BC failed by 11 to 142, and the second, whether to hold a referendum on BC-STV, passed by 146-7.

The Assembly issued its recommendation in October, 2004, and its final report in December. It also determined the wording, with advice from constitutional lawyers, for the referendum question to appear on the ballot in the May 17, 2005, provincial legislative elections: "Should British Columbia change to the BC-STV electoral system as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform? Yes/No" Based on a general rule of thumb that it takes three election cycles for a new system to be put to a fair test, they recommended that BC-STV be reviewed following three elections, and—in the spirit of the process that brought them to this point—they recommended that citizens be involved in the review.

The Assembly addressed the issue of ballot position in its Final Report, recommending that names on the ballot be grouped by parties, and that the order of names and order of parties be randomized on the ballots. Skeptics were quick to point out that party grouping of names would tend to offset the new opportunities given to those voters who wish to elevate candidate over party in their voting decisions.

Finally, the Assembly defended its choice based on the values determined to be of highest priority in BC—proportionality, continued local representation, more voter choice (of candidates and of parties), less power for political parties, and an end to majority governments based on the "artificial majorities" created by FPTP. The Final Report also included the promise that there would be no "safe seats" and few "wasted votes." The Assembly Report stated candidly that under BC-STV, future governments would likely be coalition or minority, but presented this as a strength rather than a weakness because it would necessitate greater party cooperation, make MLAs more attentive to local concerns and guarantee more meaningful public debate.

The Single Transferable Vote System

BC-STV was described as being "as easy as 1,2,3" for the voters to make their choices even if it is complex to understand. The following is an explanation of how this system works:

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) system which the Citizen Assembly has chosen to recommend for British Columbia is a variant of proportional representation in which voters rank candidates and the rankings may then be combined to determine which candidates surpass a preset threshold number of votes to be elected within a district, or "riding" in Canada. Because votes are cast for candidates (rather than party lists), the system is intended to reduce the prominence of parties in the balloting process and, presumably, increase the influence of constituency loyalties.³⁷

The threshold a candidate must reach to be elected is defined by the Droop Quota, named for the English mathematician and lawyer who proposed it in the 19th century. The quota is derived by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of votes in the riding}}{\text{Total number of seats} + 1} + 1$$

Fractions are ignored.

If 100,000 votes are cast to elect five representatives, then the quota equals 100,000 divided by 6, or 16,666, plus 1 for 16,667. To be elected, candidates must receive at least 16,667 votes through some combination of the rankings, beginning with being ranked number one.³⁸ (If the voting doesn't work out in such a way that all five candidates can achieve the threshold number, then the ones with the highest number are chosen.)

The logic of this approach is that 16,667 votes is the smallest number that the five candidates can win and not leave enough remaining for a sixth candidate to win. Thus:

5 x 16,667 = 83,335, and 100,000 - 83,335 = 16,665; not enough to be elected;

But

5 x 16,666 = 83,330, and 100,000 - 83,330 = 16,670; enough to elect a sixth candidate.

Any candidate who receives the quota of first place votes (16,667 in the example) is elected immediately, i.e. without any further calculations. But if candidates fall short of the quota before the required number are elected (and this appears to be routinely expected) the rankings come into play and a series of calculations have to be made. Here is a somewhat simplified summary of the BC-STV version of the process (it *is* simplified, really!).³⁹

(1) If no candidate reaches the quota, the candidate with the least first-place votes is eliminated and all of his or her votes are redistributed to the other candidates on the basis of 2nd preferences. This continues until somebody reaches the quota.

(2) Whenever a candidate surpasses the quota, a number of "surplus" votes of that candidate equal to the number over the quota (i.e., over 16,667) are redistributed to the other candidates based on the second place votes. (So if a candidate has 18,667 votes, 2,000 votes would be distributed downward to other candidates. If the candidate had gotten 18,667 first place votes, this redistribution would have been the first step in the transfer process.) If the redistribution process pulls another candidate up to the quota, that candidate is deemed to be elected and his or her "surplus" votes are redistributed.

(3) If after distributing "surplus" votes the required number of seats have still not been filled, then candidates with the least first place votes begin to be eliminated (again) and *all* of their votes are redistributed on the basis of 2nd place rankings. When redistribution of their votes results in a new candidate achieving the quota, then any "surplus" votes that candidate now has over the quota will be redistributed in the next step, and so on until all of the seats are filled.

(4) If in the transfer process a 2nd preference candidate to whom votes are due has already been elected, the BC-STV system includes a provision to substitute still lower preferences to effect transfer of the votes.

(5) If the redistribution process fails to produce the required number of winners who reach the quota, the STV process may then resort to choosing candidates who are closest to the quota. The distribution of third and lower preferences that is provided for in the BC-STV system would seem to make this procedure unlikely.

(6) When "surplus" votes are to be distributed from a candidate who has surpassed the Droop quota, a decision must be made about how to choose the votes to be transferred. One way is to randomly select a number of ballots equal to the number that need to be transferred and assign the secondary preferences out of that group. One risk, of course, is that the selection will be strongly skewed and the second preferences in the group that is grabbed will not proportionately represent all the second preferences. The BC-STV proposal addresses this problem by using what is called a fractional transfer system to generate a "transfer value." Under this system, the number of "surplus" votes which must be transferred, divided by the total number of first place votes the candidate received, is then multiplied times all the number two votes, and each resulting fraction is transferred to the candidate for which the secondary preference was cast. Thus, using the example above:

If 700 of this candidate's first-place supporters cast 2nd preference votes for candidate B, the number of 2nd preference votes actually given to B is $(2,000 \text{ times } 700) / 18,667$, or 75 votes. Ideally, when the process is over, the ratio has been multiplied against all the ballots, and $(2,000 / 18,667) \times 18,667 = 2,000$, so the equivalent of 2,000 votes will have been transferred.

(7) If during the transfer process ballots are encountered on which a preference has not been checked, the ballot is dropped and the numbers in the calculations are adjusted accordingly.

In support of BC-STV, the documentation for the Citizens' Assembly argues such benefits as the following:

(1) The current single member district system "wastes" votes (because those who vote on the losing side in a riding are presumably unrepresented) and argues that the BC-STV system will allow everyone to have a share of representation.

(2) By focusing on candidates, the system will make the candidates work harder to reach and please the constituencies, and give voters "more power."

Commenting on the appeal of the STV system, David Farrell notes that it is "both proportional and facilitates constituency politicians," and when compared to list systems gives voters a better chance of seeing their own preferred candidates win.⁴⁰ The constituency emphasis has been argued to be associated with a British heritage in electoral systems: STV has been used in the Republic of Ireland, the national Senate elections in Australia, and in Malta, and in some regional and local elections in Australia, Northern Ireland, and the USA.⁴¹

These arguments are not conclusive, and there are other issues to be confronted. Large districts with many seats can easily overload voters. To address this, the BC-STV proposal envisions districts of 2 to 7 seats. However, one criticism of the approach is that small districts of two or three seats make Gerrymandering of the districts easier.⁴² Another is that list systems tend to elect twelve or more candidates per district and the smaller numbers typically elected in STV districts make the system less proportional in its results. (In the Irish Republic, the number is typically three to five.)⁴³

Also, the use of the Droop quota in STV allows candidates who start with very few first-place votes (as few as five per cent in some examples), to pool 2nd preferences until they succeed in beating candidates who were close to top in first-place votes at the beginning of the redistribution. Presumably, the large plurality of voters who gave the first-place votes to a loser are supposed to appreciate the greater good that is served by giving in to the also-ran preferences of other voters and feel empowered anyway.

And there is at least a potential discrepancy between in the idealized and practical effects of the system. Many variations are possible in PR systems — e.g., over how to distribute or redistribute votes against thresholds — and one of the major sets of considerations that seems to influence the choices involves preferences regarding political parties — how to favor large or small parties, or to strengthen or weaken parties altogether. The results are not easily analyzed and do not always seem to match up with the vision.

For example, in PR list systems the Droop Quota may be used as one way of allocating seats in a class of approaches known as "largest-remainder" formulas. Another is the Hare quota, which simply equals the number of votes over number of seats. It is argued to be "fairer" than the Droop quota because it makes it possible for every voter to be "represented" if all the votes wind up being cast for winners.

For example, 100,000 votes divided by 5 = 20,000; if five parties each get 20,000 votes or something close to it, then all five get a candidate elected and nobody's vote is "wasted." The argument is that the Droop Quota makes it possible for all 5 candidates to be elected with less than the full 100,000 votes and is therefore less representative. In practice, however, when some parties receive more votes than the Hare quota and some less, the quota is subtracted from the votes of the ones above it, and the remainders are then ranked with the totals of those below the quota. The higher ranks win in descending order until the seats are filled.

Smaller parties will only get seats if their votes exceed the remainder left over after the larger parties have subtracted the quota for each of the seats they win. So if one party received 34,000 votes and another received 12,000, the first party's winner would result in a remainder of $34,000 - 20,000 = 14,000$, and it would be in line to elect another representative

before the smaller party. But if the smaller party gets 14,000 and the larger one gets 32,000, the smaller party can win a representative.

By contrast, when the Droop Quota is used and the voters are voting for parties, all of the votes of the large parties are consolidated and they have to get past a smaller quota to elect each candidate. On the surface of it, smaller parties seem to have a somewhat better chance of winning some seats under the Hare Quota.⁴⁴ However, when the Droop quota is used in STV (which presumably deemphasizes political parties) it allows *candidates* who start with very few first-place votes to pool lower preferences and win anyway, and it may actually open avenues for small parties to vault candidates into office as lower preference champions.

It is still not clear how any of these approaches is superior at the ideal of representing everybody. However, the argument that BC-STV will probably weaken the control of major political parties over the policy process looks persuasive on the surface of it.

The Push for Approval

Almost immediately after the close of the Citizens' Assembly, a "Yes" campaign was underway, spearheaded by two groups. The first was a Citizens' Assembly "alumni" group formed to promote and explain their chosen system. Among other activities, they provide a web site, "BC-STV Electoral System"⁴⁵ and a speakers' bureau. A second group, "STV for BC" has also created a web site on which it posts relevant supportive editorials and information, resources, links, and a discussion forum.⁴⁶ "Fair Voting BC," one of the organizations that had proposed a type of citizens' assembly in the late 1990s with a stated goal of wanting to move BC to a more proportional system, has committed itself during the referendum campaign to helping voters make an educated choice by promoting debate and distributing information.⁴⁷

The two major political parties, immersed in their own campaigns for the Legislative Assembly, have maintained at least a surface neutrality. As one columnist noted, no politician wants to be the first to reject the good works of BC's citizens.

At present an orchestrated visible "No" campaign has not emerged, although there have been negative editorial comments. Editorial objections include the following:

a. The Citizens' Assembly, while well-intentioned, hard-working, and earnest, is not democracy in action, because it was not an elected representative body. As Stephan Hume wrote in the Vancouver Sun, "I have no say in their selection. I have no idea who any of them are save for a brief thumbnail perused on a web site. Not one of the delegates is really accountable politically for the decisions ultimately taken. I didn't vote them in so I can't vote them out..."⁴⁸

b. A democratic voting system should be "transparent" and "instantly verifiable" and STV-BC is neither.⁴⁹

c. Premier Gordon Campbell should read his history to learn why the British parliamentary system is the best in the world. "And who but someone who attended a U.S. university would have set up the Citizens' Assembly, which is recommending that British Columbia take a leap in the dark and adopt an electoral system used by only one Commonwealth country?"⁵⁰

It is not our purpose to predict passage or failure of the referendum, nor are we in a good position to do so from our vantage point. However, several speculations by others are worth noting:

1. First is the prediction that the referendum will fail because people generally oppose change and are uneasy about the unknown.

2. Second is the prediction that a failed attempt in Vancouver in December to change the nature of city council elections from at-large to wards is a harbinger of the failure of BC-STV. (Countering this view is the observation that there was no shared sense of a problem that needed fixing in Vancouver as there is province-wide.)

3. The referendum will pass because it was created by "earnest people" with whom it is hard to disagree.

4. The referendum will pass but more because of unhappiness with the status quo than because of enthusiasm about BC-STV.

Whether or not BC-STV passes on May 17, the Citizens' Assembly has served to start or speed up the wheels of electoral reform in four other provinces. The government of Quebec introduced legislation in 2004 that called for FPTP to be replaced by MMP for elections to Quebec's legislature, the National Assembly. The earliest likely date for this to take effect if passed would be 2011. Prince Edward Island's Premier has called for a referendum in November of this year on a form of MMP. If approved, it could be used as early as 2006. The choice of systems was made by the PEI Electoral Reform Commission. Ontario is launching its own Citizens' Assembly based on the BC model, and the New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy recommended in January of this year that a form of MMP be put to the voters in a referendum no later than 2007.⁵¹

Even in Alberta, the birthplace of Canadian populism but currently the most conservatively-governed of its ten provinces, options other than ballot-eating protests may emerge. In the November, 2004, provincial election, the Progressive Conservatives won almost 75% of the seats with less than 50% of the vote, leading the Calgary Herald to editorialize that the time has come for electoral reform, and to recommend a citizens' assembly for Alberta. Fair Vote Alberta had launched a campaign on behalf of this goal in the previous month as had Alberta's New Democratic Party.⁵²

Alberta has made its protest known of a related representational issue at the national level—Senate reform. Despite years of criticism, the Senate remains an appointed body. Senators, chosen not from provinces but from regional grouping of provinces, are appointed for by the Prime Minister and serve until age 75. Alberta has shown its disapproval of this practice by holding elections for "senators-in-waiting" in the hope, thus far unrealized under Liberal federal governments, that their choices might become the Prime Minister's choices. However, in November's provincial elections, protesters protested the protest by rejecting their senatorial ballots. They also pointed out the "hypocrisy" of their Premier's criticism of the lack of electoral reform at the federal level while avoiding the issue in his own province.⁵³

Assessing Lessons and Implications

Several lessons for the other provinces, the federal government, and perhaps the U.S., can be drawn from the BC experience, even though it is still in progress:

First, politics is the art of the possible. Past experience has shown that it is easier to move from FPTP voting to STV than to PR because, despite its complicated calculations, it preserves familiar values – constituencies and an emphasis on individual candidates rather than impersonal party lists. At the same time, as the BC case illustrates, such a change involves a trade-off—opting either for larger ridings in order to make them multi-member or significantly increasing the size of BC's Provincial Assembly to allow the addition of MLAs to pre-existing ridings—thus adding to the cost and complexity of the legislature.

Second, the Citizens' Assembly proved, by all accounts, to be a remarkable exercise in cooperation, consensus building, hard work, good will, and all those values one would dream about in the ideal legislature. This led to considerable rhetoric about how a randomly selected group of ordinary citizens has been able to accomplish what elected officials cannot do. In other words, while BC-STV, if it passes, will bring with it a high level of legitimacy it may do little to improve overall trust in government in which elected officials do not have the leisure to spend a year devoting days and hours to a single topic that all have a shared commitment to fixing. The rhetoric also has overlooked the fact that the BC government recognized that the discipline of political science has contributions to make to "good government" and that the Citizens' Assembly represented not just a group of ordinary voters reinventing the wheel but of committed citizens drawing on the observations and thoughts of political scientists about the spectrum of electoral systems.

The Citizens' Assembly appears to have developed a group self-awareness and realization that they were under observation as part of a unique experiment that could effect major improvements in their democratic processes. For example, in view of speculation that such a body could not function as a true assembly of equals but that cleavages and power relations would develop over the course of its eleven-month life span, they sponsored a study by Montreal political scientist Andre Blais of the Assembly's internal interactions.⁵⁴ One can only speculate as to whether similar efforts in BC to address other problems or in other provinces to address electoral reform would achieve the same degree of commitment and dedication and apparent good will, and the extent to which this was achieved in BC because the group knew they were pioneers doing something special.

Amidst the justifying rhetoric about giving citizens "more power" and alleviating "wasted votes," the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly in British Columbia appear to be headed directly toward a more consensual system with heightened emphasis on constituency loyalty over party discipline. The discussions and documentation generated by the Assembly and its staff have been enormous, and we have hardly begun to see it all, so it is not clear to us yet how carefully the implications of this shift for the overall process of governance have been considered. The recommended adoption of STV does appear to have been based on assumptions that it would produce greater proportionality in party representation, together with enhanced attention and service to constituencies.

Part of the rationale for BC-STV is that it will encourage more coalition building between parties, that coalition governments can be reasonably stable, and effective in making needed policies over long periods of time, and that the greater proportionality in BC will result in policies reflecting a broader spectrum of political interests. The desire to enhance attention to constituencies by legislators appears to have been an important reason that STV was selected over a mixed-member proportional system.

The decisions being made in British Columbia, and the underlying motivations of the Citizens' Assembly have interesting and important implications for Western democratic behavior and institutions in general. If they win their bet that coalitions can make coherent policy on a sustained basis while candidate-centered elections produce more attention for constituencies, they may prove that it is possible to have one's political cake and eat it too, at least to some degree not previously experienced. To accomplish this, they must hope that the new incentives for constituency attention produce additional constituency casework and consultation while sufficient party discipline is retained to allow negotiated coalitions to enact policies.

But they are indeed engaged in an experiment with uncertain results, and may be exhibiting a "grass is greener" mentality of the sort described by Mahler with regard to the frustrations and comparative envy experienced between Canadian and U.S. legislators,⁵⁵ at least in the sense that the Citizens' Assembly seems to have decided that there must be some other, better approach than the one in use.

It is possible that the interests driving the process in British Columbia are exactly as they appear, and that the reasoning is on the surface. The process has certainly been consciously meticulous, protracted, energetic, and open, on a scale far beyond the usual practice in government reform inquiries. It is also possible, however, that the frustrations being expressed are another, indirect outgrowth of the more general disillusionment with government which began to develop in the Western democracies in the 1970s.⁵⁶ If this is true, the frustrations with the electoral system may reasonably be interpreted as an indirect effect of frustration with the complex and often irritating or threatening governance processes of modern industrial nations — i.e., processes in which both citizens and legislators must compromise mightily with large, often selfish economic interests, diverse social interests and value systems, and technically oriented government bureaucracy, through the mechanisms of the administrative state. From this perspective, it is probably not surprising that the governing national parties often have less than majority support from the electorate (albeit, they usually have the support of larger minorities than anyone else can generate!).

The risk is that battling such frustrations by shifting emphasis from party discipline to constituency loyalty may not "empower" voters so much as shift emphasis from one type of power to another. The power that is gained in direct control over a few legislators may be traded against the loss of power for a society (in this case the province) to make coherent policy. Changes in electoral systems will not automatically change all of the economic and social institutions with which the electoral process must interact.

From the perspective of U.S. reform thinking, and drawing on Mahler's pointed comparisons,⁵⁷ the incentives for constituency loyalty may drive beyond what was anticipated; beyond constituency consultation and advocacy and into crass "pork barrel politics;" beyond coalition building and into survivalist, atomized district loyalties. The costs we in the U.S. might attribute to such a system, at our national level, have included the failure to bring the U.S. into the League of Nations under President Wilson, the failure to generate a national energy policy under Carter, and the failure to create a national health program under Clinton. The greater power experienced by citizens in such circumstances may be little more than a kind of Mighty Mouse individualism — a self-important political muscularity in regard to small things.

For all of these reasons, the reform initiative in British Columbia is a fascinating and potentially highly informative development for political scientists. The exercise in citizen involvement has been energetic and ambitious; the experiment with STV, if adopted, will be creative and risky; the results may test the feasibility of a significant new variant in the organization of processes for elections and governance; and a new opportunity will be created for comparative analysis of reform institutions. It is quite possible, of course, that the results produced by systems of governance reflect prevailing political culture, and that BC-STV will not produce undisciplined policy processes because the citizens of British Columbia will not allow it. In any event, to offer a "first past the post" analogy, the first provincial horse is out of the starting gate and others appear to be following close on its heels, without even waiting, as John Courtney had imagined they would, to see if British Columbia's reform succeeds in its goals. Finally, at least at this moment, for anyone seeking to promote electoral system change, there are better options available than eating ballots.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Hungry for change, voter eats ballot", CBC News, November 19, 2004, <http://www.cbc.ca/>. Other creative means of eating or otherwise disposing of ballots may be found on the web site of the Edible Ballot Society, <http://edibleballot.tao.ca>.
- ² David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*. (New York: PALGRAVE, 2001), p. 10.
- ³ Gregory Mahler, "Congress and the House of Commons: Legislative Behavior and Legislative Roles in Two Democracies." Chapter 20 in *Annual Editions Comparative Government: 03/04* (Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004), p. 88.
- ⁴ Detailed discussions of electoral systems can be found in Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, and in the web site of IDEA: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (<http://www.idea.int/esd/systems.cfm>) and ACE: Administration and Cost of Elections Project (<http://www.aceproject.org>).
- ⁵ See Douglas J. Amy, *Behind the Ballot Box: A Citizens' Guide to Voting Systems* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000); also Stephen Bittle, "Renewing Democracy: Debating Electoral Reform in Canada," Discussion Paper, Law Commission of Canada, 2002. (<http://www.lcc.gc.ca>)
- ⁶ Bittle, p. 31; these and other values are also debated at great length on the Citizens' Assembly on "Babble: The Rabble.ca" Discussion Forum (<http://www.rabble.ca>).
- ⁷ John Courtney, "Reforming Representational Building Blocks: Canada at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century," in *Political Parties, Representation, and Electoral Democracy in Canada*, William Cross, ed. (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 116.
- ⁸ Bittle, pp. 43–44; also Henry Milner, ed., *Making Every Vote Count* (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999) and *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count*, (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004) include chapters on changes in the UK, New Zealand, and other countries.
- ⁹ Bittle, pp. 15–17.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ¹² Stephen Brooks, *Canadian Democracy: An Introduction*, 4th Ed. (Don Mills, Ontario: 2004), pp. 274–277.
- ¹³ "Canadian Election Reform" (<http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/reform.html>).
- ¹⁴ Bittle, p. 19.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ¹⁸ Courtney, pp. 124–128.
- ¹⁹ Voter turnout in federal elections dropped from a high of 77% in the 1960s to 66% in the 1990s; see Bittle, p. 7.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- ²¹ Brooks, pp. 274–277.
- ²² Bittle; Law Commission of Canada, *Final Report — Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*, 2004.
- ²³ Larry Gordon, "Prospects for Federal Voting System Reform in Canada," in Milner, *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count*, p. 301.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 296–297.
- ²⁵ Roger Gibbins and Jennifer Stewart, "Wither or Whither the Populist Influence in Western Canada," in Cross, pp. 87–89.
- ²⁶ See Robert Patterson, "People Power: British Columbia's Experience with Recall." *Electoral Insight*, November, 1999, available on line at Elections Canada web site, <http://www.elections.ca>.

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- ²⁷ Norman J. Ruff, "Electoral Reform and Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly" in Milner, *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count*, pp. 244–245.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ³⁰ "Why is BC at the Forefront of the Electoral Reform Movement?" <http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/electoral/citizen-assembly/bc-reform.html>.
- ³¹ Ruff, p. 238.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 236.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 242.
- ³⁴ Except as otherwise noted, the following discussion of the Citizens' Assembly is based on the Citizens' Assembly *Final Report* and *Technical Report* and other information available at www.citizensassembly.bc.ca; See also "BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform," <http://www.fairvotecanada.org>.
- ³⁵ Ruff, p. 240.
- ³⁶ Farrell, Op. Cit.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 121–152.
- ³⁸ Wikipedia, "Droop Quota." <http://www.answers.com/topic/droop-quota>. (Answers.com, undated: retrieved February 21, 2005); Lung, Richard, "The Ross quota and cross-constituency PR." <http://www.voting.ukscientists.com/ross.html>. (November 25 and December 14, 2002).
- ³⁹ For more information, see Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, "Making Every Vote Count: The Case for Electoral Reform in British Columbia." (Technical Report, December, 2004), especially pp. 17–20.
- ⁴⁰ Farrell, p. 121.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122–123.
- ⁴² "New Democracy File Fifteen: Objections to Some Methods and Design Features – Part Two of Two," <http://www.mich.com/~donald/dispute2.html>, Updated March 8, 2001, p. 4.
- ⁴³ BC NDP Committee, "Reform of BC's Electoral System: An Idea Whose Time has Come." (Discussion Paper, Revised Draft, August, 2001), p. 13.
- ⁴⁴ See Reynolds, Andrew, and Arend Lijphart, "How Votes Become Seats." <http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc06>. (Administration and Cost of Elections Project, created May 18, 1998; modified January 11, 2002 by Jim Carrico).
- ⁴⁵ www.bc-stv.ca
- ⁴⁶ <http://stvforbc.com>
- ⁴⁷ <http://www.fairvotingbc.com>
- ⁴⁸ Stephen Hume, "Democratic? Anything But," *The Vancouver Sun*, November 6, 2004, posted under "News and Events" on the Citizens' Assembly web page.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ Norman Spector, "What does Martin need at Christmas?," *Times Colonist*, Victoria, BC, December 24, 2004, A18. Gordon Campbell received his BA from Dartmouth and his MBA from Simon Fraser University in BC.
- ⁵¹ John Ibbitson, "A landmark year for provincial electoral reform," *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, December 23, 2004, A5; Fair Vote Canada, www.fairvotecanada.org/fvc/Current_News/#nb/
- ⁵² See Doug Bailie, "Electoral Reform Long Overdue," *The Calgary Herald*, p. A20, November 24, 2004, posted on FairVote Canada web page (<http://www.fairvotecanada.org>).
- ⁵³ Brooks, p. 241; Mindelle Jacobs, "Senate election not real reform," *Canoe*, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2004, http://www.canoe.ca/NewsStand/Columnists/Edmonton/Mindelle_Jacobs/2004/12/05/pf-765917.html
- ⁵⁴ Ruff, p. 248, n. 14.
- ⁵⁵ Mahler, p. 88.
- ⁵⁶ *The Economist*, "Public Opinion: Is There a Crisis?" July 17, 1999, pp. 51–52.
- ⁵⁷ Mahler, pp. 86–87.