

Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System: Volume 2

Submissions and correspondence from Members of Parliament

Austin Mitchell MP

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FROM AUSTIN MITCHELL MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: AM/JB

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The Rt Hon Lord Jenkins of Hillhead OM
Chairman
The Independent Commission
on the Voting System
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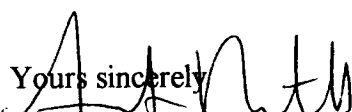
Dear Roy

I'm afraid I wasn't able to get to your consultation meeting for MPs on 30 June because the Public Accounts Commission meeting overran. Some asked some questions, a most unusual development.

As a long-standing supporter of Proportional Representation, my hope is that when the Commission selects a proportional system for the public to vote on as against first-past-the-post, it will accept something which is simple and straightforward rather than going for any of the esoteric combinations which are sometimes urged. Since the basic choice must be between STV and AMS my own preference is for the Additional Member System as used in Germany since this allows a reasonable balance between the constituency choice and the party choice which will in many ways be a balance between "ministrables" and those who prefer the constituency role. The balance need not be fifty fifty since a topping up list element of, say, a third would make the result proportionate enough.

However, I would add that it's pointless getting into the bitter arguments between advocates of different systems. They can be very sectarian and, frankly, as long as we introduce proportionality with a constituency element I wouldn't object to STV.

Either system is preferable to the present because both open up politics and give the consumer, the voter, more power and influence.

Yours sincerely

AUSTIN MITCHELL