

Citizens' Assembly opts out of its responsibility

Re: Voting system lacks fairness: assembly, March 22

I read, with disappointment, the Preliminary Statement of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Intended to form the basis for discussion at province-wide public hearings, it does little more than point out well-worn arguments for and against various electoral systems.

It made sense for the assembly, chosen at random from the voters list, to begin by looking at these arguments. Members have subsequently had briefings from the best experts. But instead of offering preliminary conclusions or sharing insights, they simply invite British Columbians to now join in a discussion of electoral reform without the benefit of these briefings or even a document that narrows down the list of choices to those with a reasonable chance of working in B.C.

If B.C. residents stay away from public hearings, let us not conclude this indicates satisfaction with the status quo. Rather it shows the obligation of leaders to lead. The legislators of British Columbia opted out and turned this issue over to a Citizens Assembly. Now the assembly seems to be opting out. With nothing to discuss, other than abstract principles of electoral reform, how many British Columbians will bother to participate in the regional meetings?

GARY LEVY, EDITOR
Canadian Parliamentary Review
Ottawa

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