

## Sunday night

Well, enough with wasting time following lady bullfighters on twitter. Got to find something useful to do. I have finished filing the documents to sue the City of Toronto for a million dollars, so now what?

The general meeting of the Toronto chapter of Fair Vote Canada has come and gone and I was there. I should follow up on what I wrote beforehand about it. Some other people have commented on it on the Fair Vote list. They even imported some stuff from this "Fair Vote chapters" list.

Someone says three AV types got onto the board. I counted only two, but I had a short time to figure out who all these people really were. I was not expecting to be able to vote because I only put the member fee cheque in the mail the week before.

But Wayne came up waving a ballot paper at me, saying I could vote because I am a "long standing member". I have been standing around for a long time. So I voted, but had few choices to vote for.

I rejected out of hand the names on the "official slate". I do not like "slates" for reasons you will know if you have read my previous posting about the problems in the chapter. Of course I would not vote for any advocate of AV (Alternative to Voting fairly) .

That left me with two people to vote for. One of them got elected. So, as some one commented, the next few meetings will be interesting ones; that is if they even hold them.

One encouraging thing is that the part of the amendment where meetings will be officially held secretly, as opposed to unofficially secret as they are now, was voted down. Whether that will be respected, I do not know. If I can find out the time and place of the meetings, I will go and watch the fun and games.

The excuses for not opening the meetings were arrogant hogwash. They would have to book a bigger room? It is not like hundreds or even dozens of people would show up at these meetings. Just have the people RSVP.

But the point was made that if people who are really interested can come and observe, they can inform themselves about the issues and decide if they want to be part of the board. This is how you get good quality people on your board, not by going out and trying to recruit professional 'activists'.

As for the AV crowd, somebody said it very well at the meeting. Why do they have to try to take over Fair Vote? If they want to promote AV, form an AV group and leave the PR people alone.

I answered that a couple of weeks ago. It is because they are hyperpolitical operators for a political party which wants AV because they think it will help them rig the system in

their favor. These kinds of people do not want to engage in persuasion, because they know that most people will never be persuaded if they have all the information. They want to shut down any alternative to their Alternative, any source of a different perspective.

This is why their snivelling about the suppression of their right to a "point of view" is so hypocritical and vomitogenic. With them, freedom of expression only works one way; their way. This is the authoritarian personality in operation.

I have written about the authoritarian personality and proportional representation before in this forum. Basically, they are incapable of getting what the point is about proportional voting. Proportional is in fact a bit misleading; it is not about exact proportionality of the vote but the fact that one person cannot fairly represent an entire geographic area.

All these kind of people can think about when they approach voting reform is that their side is not able to gain control, or is losing control, and how can the system be "fixed" so they can win. There are two groups of people driving this AV thing in Toronto and one of them are the operatives for the Liberals. AV is a Liberal thing because they think it will favor them because they occupy the "middle" and no one would be able to win against them without getting half the vote in the first round.

This is what pigeon head has always been about. The "Toronto idol" event a few years ago was all about finding people to run for city council to split the "left" vote. The "Public Space Committee" was about creating a Liberal party alternative to leftist civil rights groups.

The other group pushing AV are some fairly hard left people. What they see in it is less clear. The main line NDP are the big pushers of Proportional Representation. However, some clues are available from France, where a "two stage runoff" system, functionally equivalent to AV, is used to elect the national assembly.

I recall explaining on this list that the voting system of France was imposed by General DeGaulle after he took power in what amounted to a coup d'etat. Before that, in the fourth republic, France had a PR system with many parties and coalitions which the elite considered to be "unstable". In the fifth republic France has had a two party system in fact, even though there are still a lot of parties.

Every vote comes down to a "left" candidate and a "right" candidate. Of course, left and right get to be relative and the center keeps getting pushed to the right. What this does is give a great deal of control to party bosses.

This is shown by what happened when there was an attempt to return to a proportional system in France. It lasted one term. The party bosses found they were losing the control they had become accustomed to and they put a stop to PR again.

AV is wonderful for party big wheels and also can work to polarize the political spectrum into single left and right parties. Some elements in the NDP, especially the more

troublesome radical ones, might have the idea that a left party could be consolidated by an AV system, might have a better chance of winning an election, might be easier for them to control. This may be what some of these student radical types hanging around Fair Vote Toronto are about.

So, here is the big danger from AV. Party big shots from all across the spectrum might decide that AV is the solution to their problem of keeping control. Much of the NDP establishment would love to have a two party system with single constituencies, just as much as would conservatives.

They could decide who is nominated, be assured of getting at least some seats, and could control government spending in these constituencies. As well, with AV it is less likely that one of the bipolar parties would be almost wiped out in an election, as often happens with what we have now. Even in a 'landslide', the winner rarely gets over half the vote in the first round.

That is my take on it. Now the question is still, how to get the hyperpartisan jokers from all parties and networks out of the Fair Vote Toronto executive? That is a difficult question but a good way to start would be to get some more antipartisan people onto that board.

Well, now. Since I have been writing this about eight posts have come over this list. People have nothing to do on a Sunday night but sit in front of the damned computer screen typing up a storm about the meeting and issues falling out of it.

I am going to sleep and tomorrow I will draft this and send it off.

## **Tuesday night**

Well, no, Monday I was very busy with the usual end of the month stuff, and some other matters that came up. Also, part of Tuesday. It is \$5 Tuesday so I went over to the movies and watched "Hunger Games".

Jennifer Lawrence is so cute and sexy when she is shooting arrows into people. I just know she is a PR person so can we put her in the woods with all the AV creeps and settle this controversy that way? Shchunk!, shchunk!, shchunk!...? And I am sure the legislature of "Panem" is elected by AV, by whatever name they will call it.

So, I opened up the inbox and was astounded at the volume of crap going out on the Fair Vote list. It is depressing that Meslin has gained such control over discussion. People are even honking away at what exactly to call AV, instead of calling it a non issue and being done with it.

You would think by now people would have noticed that Meslin never really replies to any criticism of AV. He just ignores it and repeats the same thing over and over in slightly different terms. Yet people keep on as if they were trying to convince him.

He does not have any real argument for AV either. All it amounts to is, this is what you are going to get in Toronto, so you better get on side with it. This is, again, the authoritarian mentality.

As I have said before, the city government of Toronto is completely under the thumb of the provincial government. This will not change until there is a more democratic system at the provincial level. This is where Toronto PR activists must focus their efforts.

Now I also say that if Fair Vote Toronto Chapter is ever going to be an effective group, it has to get the professional activists out of the picture. Most of the people now involved with FVTC just do not have the capacity for that and so do not want to think about it. This is why I think the group is a dead loss and needs to be completely relaunched with a new crew.

You need some people who have the sense to not try to deal with professional activists, to not get into debate with them, to not let anyone set the terms of a debate, to not try to convince someone who is obviously not going to be convinced but is simply out to get what he or she wants. Above all, you do not need idiots who will debate with someone who is not really saying anything.

People need to get it that voting systems are only one part of a real democracy and not even the most important part. Majority rules, with four votes for, and three votes trying to undermine the other four, is a contemptible imitation of real democracy. People need to learn consensus democracy by studying groups who have learned consensus decision making, such as various religious groups or the participatory democracy movement.

Consensus rules is the way to deal with disruptors like the Meslin crew. It is not about talking eternally until somehow magically everyone agrees. It is about seriously examining the motives of people blocking consensus.

The most common set of consensus rules is that if everyone cannot agree then it is dropped. If it is something that cannot be dropped, because it must be dealt with or because somebody is insisting, then the dissenting party has the floor and is required to explain their dissent. This means, everyone else shuts up until they finish talking, then asks questions about it, and then shuts up until they finish answering.

When no one has any further questions, and the dissenters have nothing further to say, or have started repeating themselves, then a decision is made. The majority either agrees or does not. If the latter, then the dissenters are often asked if there is anything that the group can do to make it possible for the dissenters to continue to work with the group on what all can agree on, without offending or undermining the other members.

Again, the dissenters have the floor and speak until they have said everything and been interrogated in a systematic way about it. However, in the end it is either; convince the group, drop it, or leave the group. Only a total fool believes that everyone must be included and everyone must agree before anything can happen.

If Meslin and crew were called out in this way, they would fold up quickly. They have no real argument for their AV nonsense, because there is none. All they have is "skunk in the hen house" tactics which, however, are working pretty well for them.

The 'slate' of official PR people will never be able to mount this type of challenge because they cannot stand to have their motives challenged either. They are people who are attracted to PR because they have been frustrated by the present system and want more influence for their particular causes or associations. But they also have a basically authoritarian mind set and want to be in control.

This is why the "you can't get PR, you can have AV" argument is likely to be pretty effective with Fair Vote Toronto in the end. To conclude, you have a dysfunctional situation which is going in a bad direction. The solution is an outside intervention, either from a higher level of Fair Vote or from local FVC supporters who are supporters because they are democratists first.

Send this in the morning. And so to bed. (Yawn)

### **Wednesday morning**

Amazing! Nearly 50 new messages on this list in the past three days. Most of them are very repetitive. Well, here is one more. Then I am finished unless there is some take up of my proposal to challenge both factions and relaunch the Toronto chapter.

For anyone interested, the 212 conference on Basic Income is being held at OISE in Toronto. I will be there. The way to have a real democracy, much more than by changing the voting system, is to make sure everybody has the Basic financial security and free time to be able to participate in it.

'Bye for now. tr