

More objections to proportional representation

The superiority of the first past the post system over PR can be demonstrated as follows.

At the Ruritanian general election three parties stand, A, B and C. The manifesto of A is quite different from those of B and C. The manifesto of B is quite different from that of C.

The laws of arithmetic dictate that it may happen that no one party gets a majority of the votes cast. In fact B gets more votes than either A or C but fails to win an overall majority. What should happen then?

Under first past the post, the electorate gets a B government deploying the policies set out in the B manifesto. Those who voted for the policies of A and C must wait for another day. That is what happens if you are on the losing side when choices are made.

Under PR, however, B needs to form a coalition after the election either with A or C. The electorate will not know which until the deed is done.

If, say, the coalition turns out to be with C, the electorate will get a coalition government deploying a mishmash of the policies set out in the B and C manifestos. We are seeing it happen now in Germany.

So under PR the voter cannot know what policies he or she is voting for. How can that be democratic or fair? The system is not performing its basic function.

Add that under first past the post there is a small constituency, with a close relation between voter and MP, and the matter is put beyond doubt.¹

¹ *The Times*, 5 October 1998.