

Letter in Daily Telegraph

AV: a worse way of voting than first past the post

Sir,

Gordon Brown has promised a referendum on the alternative vote (AV). This was on the ground that the present system does not ensure that more than half the voters have voted for the candidate declared successful.

AV does not ensure this either. It asks voters to list candidates in order of preference but this is fallacious because most voters have only one preference - the party they support. They don't give a fig for any of the other parties. So to put these in order of "preference" would be bogus.

At a general election we do not vote *en bloc* as in a referendum. Instead we vote by constituencies. Gordon Brown rightly said earlier that the link between the MP and the constituency is essential. This means that the outcome of a general election should reflect the way the constituencies have voted, which is exactly what the present first-past-the-post system achieves. It is not "unfair" to retain it.

Francis Bennion

The following letter from Mik Shaw, Goring-on-Sea, West Sussex was submitted on the 8 October 2009 in response to FB's letter:

Tactical voting

Sir,

Francis Bennion's reason (Letters, October 6) for rejecting the alternative vote - that we don't give a fig for any party other than our favourite - is typical of the belief of the political classes that everyone outside the Westminster village is a rabid party political animal.

I most certainly have a clear knowledge of which party I would prefer to be in power if my favourite is not elected. Moreover, many of us, at the time of voting, are influenced more by the person than the party, more so after the recent expenses revelations.

Proportional representation clearly puts us even more under the thumb of party politics. Alternative voting is the only sensible move away from minority government.

Mik Shaw