

## Submission to the Graham Committee on The Electoral Commission

I am a citizen who cares desperately about the importance of voting in government elections. I have voted in EVERY local and general election since I became old enough to vote in 1971 i.e. for 35 years. In spite of this I have all but decided never to vote again - (a) because I feel completely disenfranchised by the first-past-the-post system, and (b) I feel that parliament wields its power in a totally undemocratic way.

- a) I live in Tottenham, where David Lammy is now the MP in this safe Labour seat. A lifelong Labour supporter I voted Labour in 1997; in the last two general elections I voted Liberal Democrat which, due to the first-past-the-post system, means that my vote was effectively wasted - it had no effect whatsoever in determining the composition of the House of Commons. In all probability I will vote the same way at the next election and again, like millions of people across the country, my vote will be wasted.

Under the present system at the General Election in 2005 Labour received 35.3% of the vote and were awarded 58% of the MPs. Over 63% of the people who voted did not want a Labour Government and yet were forced to have one. 22.1% of people voted LibDem like myself, and we were rewarded with 10% of the MPs.

For every 1% of the electorate who voted Labour, they elected around 10 MPs; for every 1% of the electorate who voted Liberal, they elected less than 3 MPs. This is not democracy, this is a travesty.

While millions of people like myself across the country have no hope of affecting the outcome of an election, we will continue to see a decline in the number of people voting.

Why on earth should we continue to bother to vote when it is quite patently **pointless**? The only way that people like myself will see any point in voting is with the introduction of some form of proportional representation. I **beg** you to recommend this in your report.

- b) With the creation of the Scottish Parliament, we now have Scottish MPs at Westminster who have voted and continue to vote on contentious issues which have absolutely no effect on Scotland. This is quite simply immoral. UK MPs cannot vote on French, German or American legislation – so why should somebody representing Scotland have a say in how my life is led? This is another travesty, made worse by the fact that such practices then allow a Labour government to impose its will on the electorate, nearly two thirds of whom did not want a Labour government in the first place.

To sum up, millions of voters are disenfranchised by the first-past-the-post system, and the power of parliament is wielded in an anti-democratic way. Weasel politicians, if they ever talk about these things, give no hope of change. It is no wonder that the number of people voting in elections continues to fall – and will, without change, continue to do so. So please, forget all this nonsense about voting by text and in supermarkets – address the root causes I have cited above.

Stanley Knill June 16<sup>th</sup> 2006