From:

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(25)

My response to the questions posed is as follows.

Q1 I think there should be 4 members directly elected based on the Westminster Constituency boundaries. This would make 16*4=64 OR 18*4=72 whichever is eventually chosen.

An additional 16 (or 18) seats should be allocated based on overall votes cast in the election but these seats should exclude the largest parties. I am not sure of the correct mechanism but I am thinking of the Scottish system where the smaller parties, who do not come out top in the constituencies can get an increased representation by this secondary method.

Q2 The Term of 4 years should not be changed (at least for the near future). We need a way to break the present pattern of mainly sectarian voting. This can best be done by ensuring that political debate which is coupled with the opportunity to vote frequently is retained until we see a more balanced assembly.

Q3 No

Q4 No

Q5 Yes. Prohibit the practice of double jobbing.

Q6 No, I think it is reasonable for an MLA to be a Lord. But there is a Caveat that if the HOLords is reformed and the member is a full time legislator then double jobbing should be prohibited.

Q7 Use Primary Legislation now else loopholes will be found or exceptions cited.

Q8 Assembly must have an opposition, this is a serious failing with our present system which is leading to a dictatorial and 'we are all members of an exclusive club which doesnt criticise each other' style of government. The existing process of parties appointing ministers is satisfactory but there is no real criticism or accountabilty available to us, the electorate.

But we do not want to engineer a situation as in Scotland where one party dominates the system so completely.. This is bad for the democratic process and turns minority peoples away from politics.

So the existing system of choosing ministers is largely satisfactory but we still need a real mechanism where criticism and alternate policies can be voiced and that the voice of the public can be fully heard by the politicians in the time between elections. Recent Party attitudes to Gay Marriage and the Laws on Abortion make this essential in my view (yes I do regard our largest parties as morally bigoted and

with no interest in espousing modern thinking).

How to do this?

I think we should have a 'Committee of Scrutiny' made of of those who were elected on the basis of the overall votes for their parties, as I suggested above. Because these people would not be members of the main governing parties they can be expected to act in an independent manner in providing a critique of the ministers actions.

In addition, ministers are not accountable to the public because they spend all their working day in the Chamber or in Committee. This is wrong. They do not respond promptly, if at all, when I email them, and I email very infrequently. I think all MLAs should be required to set aside a minimum of 2 days per week to deal with their constituents and their concerns, and I do not mean delegating these jobs to other staff.

It is only by listening directly to constituent views , whether verbally or by mail or email, during the lifetime of the Assembly (and responding personally) will all MLAs properly represent their electorate. This should be mandatory.