

The Independent Commission on the Voting System

Lines to take:

- Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System (published 29 October 1998) recommended a two-vote mixed electoral system;
- Referendum promised in manifesto will be between first-past-the-post and Lord Jenkins' recommended system;
- Have no intention of widening scope of referendum to include other systems;
- No change to the voting system will be made without the explicit endorsement of the British people in the referendum;
- System recommended by Jenkins is such that it could not be in place in time for the next general election and the Commission's report acknowledges this;
- Had always been envisaged that the referendum would take place before the next general election and that remains an option, but now holding it after the next election is also an option;
- Wish first to see and be informed by a full debate in Parliament, the media and across the UK on the merits of the Jenkins proposals;
- That debate can now be influenced by people's experiences of using proportional representation systems in the Scottish, Welsh and European elections;
- Electoral Commission will be established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Bill which will put in place new rules governing national referendums. It would be a pity to hold the electoral system referendum before the next apparatus is in place.