

Why Reform?

Written by PAG

Friday, 21 November 2008 00:00

We have to ask ourselves, “Does the present system truly serve the people?”

TYNWALD

Our Parliament comprises the House of Keys, the Legislative Council and Tynwald – this is when both chambers sit together.

In the Isle of Man we have what is known as a tricameral system - the three component parts are made up of:

1. The House of Keys
2. The Legislative Council
3. when the two meet together as Tynwald.

Tynwald passes laws and levies taxes.

The House of Keys has 24 members - or MHK's - elected to represent the 15 constituencies of:

Constituency	MHK's	Constituency	MHK's
Jerre	1	Maleny & Salfon	1
Castletown	1	Midway	1
Douglas East	2	Middle	1
Douglas North	2	Oughan	3
Douglas South	2	Peele	1
Douglas West	2	Ratsey	2
Giff	1	Rushen	3
Glenfaba	1		

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It is plain to see that voters are not treated equally. Some have three representatives others only one. This inequality is best illustrated here.

The Legislative Council has nine voting members (plus the Attorney General). However - none of the Members of Legislative Council (MLC's) are elected by the people: eight are 'elected' by MHK's (and so have a vested interest in not upsetting them); the ninth is the Bishop. This is undemocratic. Of the 33 votes in Tynwald, the nine MLC's (27%) have no mandate from the people. When MLC's join the Council of Ministers they also escape scrutiny from the Keys.

GOVERNMENT

The Council of Ministers (COMIN), headed by the Chief Minister, forms the core of the executive government. There are nine departments, each headed by a Minister (and most have several 'political members – known as Department Members').

BUT: this, too, is undemocratic. Add up those COMIN members who are MHK's and the departmental political members who must show loyalty to the Department and hence the Minister over it - and there is almost an inbuilt government majority in the Keys. Few Members of Tynwald take on the role of parliamentary scrutiny: and almost every Member is in Government (as Edgar Quine says: "we have a one-party state on the Isle of Man"). And voters do not elect the Chief Minister, so we also have little say in the direction of government policy.

[See also Block Vote Diagram.](#)