

DEMOCRACY IS NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD THING

Good democratically elected Governments depend on decent individuals who will vote in a responsible manner.

A good voter is someone who considers his responsibility to other men, animals and the environment. In other words, a good voter is someone who would vote against his own best interests if he knew it would be for the far greater benefit of other people or things around him.

A simple example would be a fisherman who knows that 'over fishing' would lead to an environmental disaster and therefore voted for a draconian and rigidly policed reduction in fishing quotas which might cost him his job.

This, most would agree, is an idealistic rather than realistic state of affairs, because such altruistic actions run contrary to the nature of man. And as we know by now, human nature cannot be budged.

Human nature itself is the main stumbling block for responsible democratic governments because human nature is all about 'survival instincts', which in turn promote self interest in any activity we take part in - such as winning a game of golf, running a profitable business or voting in a government that promises us a better life.

If we agree that self interest is a basic part of our natural make up, we then have to say that our democratic system is doubly flawed because not only will the voters vote according to their own self interest, but also the politicians - who are now professional - will be inclined to debase their policies to curry favour with the voter in order to be elected into office. Because, for our modern day politician, the only way to progress up his particular ladder of life and achieve success (money and power) is to be voted into office.

So there is an underlying and inherent tendency for politicians (our rulers) to water down, and make less effective, tough laws that are necessary to control society and the environment.

Increasingly over the past fifty years or so, we have seen the public (voters) demanding easier and better living conditions and the politicians bending over backwards to satisfy these wishes, regardless of the much more fundamental considerations such as the

damage to the environment and the erosion of individual self-reliance - two very basic necessities for societies to survive. With every new 'soft' law passed, to indulge an ever more demanding and irresponsible public, so much more are individual manners and responsibility eroded.

And as we said at the very outset, a good democratically elected government can only exist on the back of good and responsible voters within that society.

Today the 'Western democratic ideal' is held up as the apple of the world's eye, but what most people do not realise is that the core of the apple is becoming rotten. For the core of any democracy are the individuals within that society and the core of the individual is the manners and responsibilities he lives by.

And there can be no arguing that these manners which form the invisible fabric that holds societies together are indeed breaking down.

The current saying that a government is bad because it is out of step with the people is not always true. Consider that a large chunk of the populace are idle scroungers - would you want your government to be in step with them?

The corollary is very similar to that of a decent well run school with an excellent head teacher that over the years has been producing decent pupils with a sense of duty to others, good manners and individual self-reliance. This is achieved on the back of good teaching methods and discipline backed by punishment.

Consider what would happen if the head teacher was visited in his dreams by a liberal Doctor Spock character and decided all of a sudden that he and his actions should be determined by the democratic principle - or the wishes of his pupils.

It doesn't take much imagination to guess what would happen! No more cold baths in the morning, less punishment, shorter working hours and chips with everything. In the end no doubt they would impeach the head teacher and war among themselves - only in the end to be saved by the re-introduction of age-old disciplines as in the case of the children in the 'Lord of the Flies'.

Who says that grown-ups are any different from children? Just because we are grown up it doesn't mean we suddenly think responsibly about other people. We still think primarily of our own self interest and on this basis, with the responsive democratic system we have, we will continue to vote for a better life for ourselves - until it is too late. Because, unlike the children in the 'Lord of the Flies',

we are the grown ups and won't have any outside agency to step in and save us.

It will only be when things are drastically wrong - when anarchy is a very real threat - that our survival instincts will kick in finally giving us the guts to vote in a very stern head teacher backed by age-old disciplines and punishment.

Usually this only happens with the threat of external aggression (invasion by another country). It is much harder to vote for more discipline when the threat comes from within.

Only then will law and order be achieved with citizens learning that they have to try their best, do their duty to others, their environment and their government. This is the only way forward, in direct contrast to the current situation where the state, the environment and neighbourhood is on its knees trying to keep the lazy individual happy.

So, you old fool: If democracy is not the best form of government, please tell us what is better.

The answer is simple. It must be a system that can best bypass 'self-interest'. That means power must be put into the hands of people who no longer have the urge to accumulate wealth. And that generally means elderly, wise and successful people who are beyond

material needs and have the confidence to look at the grander scheme of things.

Young men are naturally aggressive and acquisitive for material wealth and power. Elderly men and women who have travelled through life successfully with good rewards are ideal people to make rational decisions as to what is best for the health of a nation and the individuals in that nation. And what in the end it would mean is that they would not be afraid to introduce tougher laws that would make individuals use a little more of the talents and abilities that nature gave them to survive. That should mean that individuals begin to feel a responsibility to others and their government, rather than the other way around.

That projected on to our own society would mean that the House of Commons would act as a platform for current ideas and debate but that the real long-term power would reside in an approximation of the lofty and less populist House of Lords.