

A BETTER ALTERNATIVE

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Sir, - It is heartening to note that of late the opposition leaders have started advocating the suitability of a truly democratic presidential system vis-à-vis our current set-up.

Having adopted the British model, we have failed to evolve a strong two party system which is the very basis for successful functioning of the parliamentary system. In the absence of a strong opposition, our Prime Minister probably enjoys more power than either the British Prime Minister or the American President. We have the worst of both the systems.

The wide powers enjoyed by the U.S. Senate such as the full legislative authority (the total freedom available to all the members to vote on any legislation irrespective of the party lines), its function as an investigating body, power of impeachment and ratification of foreign treaties all these have certainly enabled it to be a check on the Executive. The emphasis on party system in the American system is much less and on many occasions President's own party is as much responsible for the check as the opposition. In the earlier years of its formation for a fairly long period there was no party in existence in the U.S.A.

The election of direct executive for Mayor's post (at the city level) and the Governor's post (at State level) brings more confidence in leadership at lower levels than our current set-up. This promotes to better leadership qualities at grass-root level. Several of our problems e.g. the current one in Punjab could be better tackled by the leaders who could have asserted themselves better had they been directly elected at the city and the State level. A Chief Minister like Mr. Barnala who is at the mercy of the legislators for his very survival can hardly provide the required leadership.

The separation of Executive from Legislature has also prevented the Congressmen (a term commonly used to indicate the members of both Houses) in the U.S.A. from being lured by power. This temptation has drawn politicians in the ruling party on some pretext or other ultimately leading to one party system.