

August 5, 2016

KEN MACLENNAN, CORNWALL, ONTARIO

## THE LEGISLATIVE OPTION

### **THE FIRST ISSUE** (Election of a representative)

In the first past the post system for 2015 based upon 25,939,742 Canadian electors and valid ballots of 17,591,468 or voter turnout of 68.3 %, the Liberal party receiving 6,942,937 votes the Liberal party would represent 39.5 % of the voter turnout . Based upon the number of total electors of 25,939,742, and Liberal voters of 6,942,937, the Liberal party would represent about 27 % of the electors . In the first past the post system in 206 of the 338 ridings the elected member does not represent the majority of the electors.

To correct the imbalance based upon a party's percentage of the vote entitled to, versus members elected in first past the post, the number of members elected would be as follows. Based upon the voter turnout , the Liberals receiving 6,942,937 or 39.5 % of the 17,591,468 vote , the Liberals would be entitled to 39.5 % of the 338 seats or 133.5 seats, where in first past the post they received 184 seats. The Conservatives receiving 31.9 % of the 17,591,468 vote would be entitled to 31.9% of the 338 seats or 107.8 seats, but elected 99 members. The NDP based upon 19.7 % of the vote would be entitled to 19.7% of 338 or 66.5 seats, but elected only 44 members by first past the post. The Bloc received 4.7 % of the vote and would be entitled to 4.7% of 338 or 15.8 seats but only elected 10 members. The Green party based upon 3.4 % of the vote would be entitled to 3.4% of 338 or 11.5 seats but elected one member based upon first past the post. All the other parties would be entitled to 2.9 seats , but elected no members.

### **THE SECOND ISSUE** (Passage of Government Bills )

Rather than using a proportional system or preferential system to correct the imbalance resulting from the first past the post system , I suggest that where under the current system the public only has the opportunity to vote on who it wants to represent them, that the public also be provided with the opportunity to provide their input on what a members vote will be on a particular piece of legislation or bill before the parliament . Doing so would address the problem of legitimacy, where the majority of electors vote for a member to represent him ,but not necessarily vote for his or her position on a particular bill before parliament , and for those 206 ridings in the 2015 election ,where a member does not represent the majority of the electors . This objective can only be met if a member seeks the vote of the public on a legislative bill from his or her constituents, and the member's vote reflects the aggregate majority vote of all the eligible electors.

In the current first past the post system a member's vote on a bill represents himself or herself

only, and therefore less than 1% of the electors or public. If instead a member's vote represented the majority vote of all eligible voters, participation in the democratic process would increase exponentially. Under the current system electors elect a member to represent him or her. The question: would an elector agree with the member's vote on a bill? To resolve such possible differences, requiring that an elected member's vote be the majority vote of all registered voters in the riding for passage of a bill would go far in correcting the imbalance in election of a member in the first past the post system, versus members entitled to by percentage of vote, as it would not only address the problem in those ridings where the member has been elected by a majority of the electors, but an elector may not agree with his or her vote, but also address the problem where a member was not elected by the majority of the electors, for example- in 2015, in 206 of the 338 ridings.

To ensure that a member's vote on a bill represents the majority of the electors, this is now possible with our modern day technology. The preferred method for voting would be by telephone, as all the public would either have a telephone or access to a telephone, and the preferred method for recording the vote would be by computer. The role of the different parties would be to agree on what bills are sufficiently important to justify an improvement in the democratic participation rate from less than 1% in the passage of a bill, to a greater participation rate in the passage of a bill, for example - that the less than 1% would represent the majority vote of 60% + or - of the electors.

To accomplish this objective, once the different political parties finalise their position on a bill, they would communicate their positions to their local riding associations and public. The date for voting on a bill would be set. Those members of the public eligible to vote on a bill would be only those from the voter's list from the last election. The voter's list would contain not only the name and address of each elector but also his or her official telephone # to be used for voting. The voter's list would include simply an alphabetic numeric listing of telephone #'s including corresponding names and addresses of all eligible voters in each separate riding.

Elections Canada would provide a call centre in each riding to which electors would call on voting day. Each riding would have a Call Centre with a bank of computers to accept the calls. Each computer would have the master voting list with the telephone # of the electors for its riding. No calls would be accepted from other telephone #'s. The call would go to one of the computers not receiving a call. If all computers are occupied, the caller would be placed on a waiting list and calls accepted by an open computer in order of time of call. Once a call is accepted by the computer and has recognized the caller as an eligible voter, the computer would advise the caller to press #1 for yes or press #2 for no, and upon such selection the call would automatically end. The vote count for # 1 and #2 for each of the 338 ridings would be forwarded to the National computer centre which would determine the final vote for or against the government's bill.

It would be the aggregate majority vote of all registered voters from all constituencies or ridings in Canada that would determine the passage or defeat of a bill. (The National central agency could be decentralized to provincial sub agencies to record the votes on any bill by province and

territory) If a bill is defeated on a non confidence bill, the governing party would resubmit a revised bill and the process repeated. Alternatively if a bill is rejected on a confidence vote, the government would be defeated and an election called. With 338 ridings 170 votes would constitute a majority number for or against a bill. Under my suggested system you would have potentially 17,591,468 electors who cast a ballot in Canada as was the case in 2015.

Filibustering on a bill for delay would no longer be possible. Party discipline or loyalty would no longer be an issue. Passage of a bill would represent a greater proportion of the population participating . The interest of the public would be increased in the actions of the government. If the vote on a government's bill results in a riding tie ,the riding member would have a second vote to break the tie.

My legislative option has six advantages. First it would increase the participation rate in the democratic process. Secondly it would address the problem where a member's vote may be different from that of his or her constituents in ridings, where the member does not represent the majority of his or her constituents, but also in ridings where he or she does represent a majority of his or her constituents. Thirdly it would go far in correcting the imbalance in members entitled to based upon percentage of votes received ,versus elected members by first past the post, when in the passing of a bill, all constituents of all the parties would have a say in the passing of a bill ,and the elected member's vote is the majority vote of all those constituents. Fourthly my suggestion would ameliorate the negative aspects of party loyalty and party discipline. Fifthly, under the current system majority governments can never be held accountable other than at election time, even majority governments elected using proportional representation or a preferential balloting system. Majority democratic governments where elected members do not represent the majority of the electorate in a large number of ridings as in the recent 2015 election can only be held accountable on the passage of a bill by the vote of all the electors in the passage of a bill. Sixthly, as no polling stations would be required and a large number of personnel to conduct a vote not required , voting costs may be low.

Democracies, in effect, under the present first past the post system , where a member's vote represents less than 1% of the people, are not unlike oligarchies, autocracies and dictatorships, or governments by the few, except in democracies you are able to change the members of the oligarchies, autocracies or dictatorships, whereas in autocracies or dictatorships you are unable, except by revolution change the members of the autocracies and dictatorships .

From a statistical perspective, as members are not selected randomly and may not be representative of the population as a whole, democracy will never represent the people. Democratic governments in the current format therefore must rely upon faith of believers.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended :

1. That the first past the post electoral system be continued
2. That parliament field test the legislative option on a selected bill , where the vote of members of parliament shall be the majority vote of electors in each of Canada's 338 ridings
3. That if the legislative option is low cost, timely and secure, that parliament extend the process to other selected major bills .

Respectfully submitted,

H. Ken MacLennan,  
Cornwall, Ontario