

To ERRE  
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## Let's Go Wild

with many voting systems at once

Our present Canadian government could go down in history as the boldest and most creative government ever in the world. Right now it is deciding how to elect its federal Parliament differently. Rather than pick just one new system, we could use different systems for different provinces (and territories) and then compare the results! Much quicker than trying them one at a time!

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland did something similar in recent years when creating their 3 regional parliaments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Let's try these systems for the 10 Canadian provinces and 3 territories, with numbers of seats (further details below the list):

1. Mixed member—Ontario (121).
2. Single transferable—Quebec (78) and British Columbia (42).
3. Weighted—Alberta (34).
4. Additional—Manitoba (14).
5. Approval—Saskatchewan (14).
6. Random—Nova Scotia (11).
7. Unitary closed party-list—New Brunswick (10).
8. Unitary open party-list—Newfoundland and Labrador (7), and Yukon (1).
9. Proxy—Prince Edward Island (4).
10. Unitary non-partisan—Northwest Territories (1) and Nunuvut (1).

For this trial, if any provincial governments agree to trade

systems with each other (for the federal Parliament), they may do so—if they give 6 months notice before the election.

After the next election, provincial governments may change the method to any of the other systems—if pre-approved by a provincial referendum. Such a referendum must be during a federal election, provincial election, or province-wide local elections.

After 2 general federal elections, call a constitutional conference to decide if one or more systems will be permanent.

Details of each system:

1. Mixed member proportional (MMP) would elect half the Ontario members (61) with the present system (single member plurality or ‘first past the post’) and elect the rest (60) using a party-list system to make the entire Ontario delegation as proportional as possible. Each voter votes for one candidate using the first system, and then immediately, in that voter’s second vote, ranks the parties and independents (from throughout the province).

2. Single transferable voting (STV) would elect 7 members from each of 10 ridings in Quebec (and one riding with 8). It would elect 7 members from each of 6 ridings in British Columbia. Each voter may rank all the candidates in that riding (for later transferring by the election officials to achieve proportionality in each riding).

3. Weighted voting. Elect MPs using the same system as now. Then the members of the House of Commons from Alberta would cast the number of votes in that legislature according to how well their parties did in the popular vote in Alberta. That weighting makes a proportional result overall in the province. For example, MPs from one party might cast 3/4 of a vote each on each question, while MPs from another party might cast 2 votes each (if their party got only half as many seats as it deserved).

4. Additional members (up to 7 overall) are elected (in addition to the usual 14) in order to achieve party proportionality overall for Manitoba as much as possible. Each Manitoba MP

would then cast 2/3 of a vote on each question (if a total provincial caucus of 21).

5. Approval voting allows each voter to vote for (approve) more than one candidate in their riding. All votes are counted equally with the plurality candidate winning in each riding in Saskatchewan. Otherwise the same as the current system.

6. Random selection of MPs. 11 names are drawn from a tumbler full of the names of all the registered candidates in Nova Scotia. Easier to register as a candidate—no nominators or deposits. A person may not be randomly selected more than once.

7. Unitary closed party-list voting treats New Brunswick as one riding. Each voter may rank the parties in order of preference. Those elected are those at the top of each party's list according to that party's popular vote in the province. Otherwise the same as #2.

8. Unitary open party-list voting treats Newfoundland and Labrador as one riding. Each voter may rank the candidates in order of preference. Parties may nominate as many as they like. Party proportionality. Otherwise the same as #2. Yukon is already only one riding.

9. Proxy system for Prince Edward Island. The island becomes one riding. Each voter votes for one candidate. All those candidates receiving 10% of the vote (or more) are elected. The votes of losing candidates are transferred to those elected—according to the pre-registered ranked preferences of the losers. Those elected then vote in the House of Commons in a weighted system according to how many votes they each got to be elected (including transfers), not weighted by party. The weighting is otherwise as in #3 (above) so the voting strength of the PEI delegation is still 4. This system is like assigning a proxy in a shareholder corporation, but with secret ballots.

10. Unitary non-partisan for Northwest Territories (1) and Nunuvut (1). Ranked (transferable) ballots, but without party names on the ballot. Because they elect only one member per territory, the result will be the same as with most other systems,

such as the alternative vote (also known as instant run-off).

*Summary:* Try about 10 different voting systems across Canada simultaneously. MMP, STV, weighted, unitary, random, etc. See what happens, maybe hold referenda.

2016 9 1—6. End.