



HOUSE OF COMMONS Special Committee on Electoral Reform

An Evolutionary Reform to Achieve Proportional Representation
Through the Use of Seat Placement by Declining Plurality Order

Submission by Joseph M. Green P.Eng. M.Eng.
On my own behalf and for my three grandchildren

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There exists a simple method of achieving proportional representation in the House of Commons without changing most of our current election rules and processes.

Only a final adjustment is required that can be made by the Chief Electoral Officer in officially filling the individual seats based upon a method of declining plurality order of the election results.

This approach substantially reduces the distortions inherent in the current First Past the Post System and impartially places elected representatives without any reference to past election preferences, or any regard to preferences by the participating political parties.

Using this method, an analysis of the last federal election was performed. Of the 338 seats, a total of 67 seats were adjusted or approximately 20% of all the seats. Thus 271 seats of this total remained the same as they would have been using the usual first past the post system.

Here is a summary of the results of this kind of adjustment by Province.

1. British Columbia	42 seats	9 adjusted	21%
2. Alberta	34 seats	8 adjusted	24%
3. Saskatchewan	14 seats	2 adjusted	14%
4. Manitoba	14 seats	0 adjusted	0%
5. Ontario	121 seats	22 adjusted	18%
6. Quebec	78 seats	13 adjusted	13%
7. New Brunswick	10 seats	5 adjusted	50%
8. Nova Scotia	11 seats	4 adjusted	36%
9. Prince Edward Island	4 seats	2 adjusted	50%
10. Newfoundland & Labrador	7 seats	2 adjusted	29%
11. Yukon	1 seat	0 adjusted	0%
12. Northwest Territories	1 seat	0 adjusted	0%
13. Nunavut	1 seat	0 adjusted	0%

Canada Wide	338 seats	67 adjusted	20%
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The adjusted constituency results filling seats are attached in Appendix "A" of this brief submission.

DETAILS

More specifically, the suggested process is purely mechanical using the same election results as are current generated with each constituency counting the votes and the percentage of the vote for each candidate. Each party participating in the election is allocated seats according to their percentage of the vote on a province by province basis, strictly, with any minor rounding errors allocated in favour of the party with the largest percentage of the vote, province by province. This process is mechanical and begins by filling seats for the party with the largest percentage of the vote, first. Thus seats are first allocated to the winning party by first filling the seats with those candidates that achieved the highest plurality, and then continuing in declining plurality order until all the seats allocated to the winning party are filled.

Next, seats are filled by the party coming in second in total seat standing, and these likewise are first filled with the candidates that scored the highest plurality in his riding, following in declining order until that runner up party has its seats filled.

Imbedded in the actual votes is the inherent preference of voters, and those candidates in minority parties that win their seats outright will always be seated in minority parties, and this result goes right down to any independent candidate that wins his seat outright.

This seat filling process continues with the third ranking party, and then the fourth until all seats are taken. This process has the major benefit that the number of voters that are represented by either their candidate, or their party, is maximized, and the number of unrepresented voters is minimized.

This process also reduces the distortions of the first past the post system, but leveling the number of voters represented by each seated candidate so that diffused but substantial support for a party like the Green Party, reduces the number of voters of that party that are represented by a candidate from that party.

Another benefit of this allocation method is that it reduces political cleavages within each Province and its principal advantage is that it makes every vote count in actually seating representatives of the party that a voter actually supported.

In most ridings that are reallocated, usually the runner up candidate is officially placed ahead of the candidate who scored with the most seats.

The disadvantage inherent with this process, is that a constituency that is hotly contested by many roughly equal candidates, could end up with a representative with a very few number of local votes cast. That is the limitation of the process, and voters in that sort of constituency can work harder for a higher plurality in the next election cycle.

RESULTS

Had this method been used, the following composition would have taken place in the House of Commons.

1. British Columbia would have obtained 13 Conservative seats instead of the 10 produced by FFP while the Liberals were have obtained only 15 seats instead of the 17 seats they received with

FPP voting. The NDP would have received 11 seats instead of the 14 seats they obtained and the Greens would have obtained 3 seats instead of the 1 that they received.

2. Alberta would have obtained 21 Conservative seats instead of the 29 produced by FPP while The Liberals would have obtained 8 seats instead of the 4 they obtained with FPP. The NDP would have received 4 seats instead of the 1 they received by FPP voting, and the Greens would have received 1 seat instead of the 0 seats with FPP voting.
3. Saskatchewan would have obtained 7 Conservative Seats instead of the 10 produced by FPP while the Liberals would have obtained 3 seats instead of the 1 they had obtained by FPP voting. The NDP would have gained 4 seats instead of the 3 won with FPP voting. The Greens did not gain enough votes to gain a seat.
4. Manitoba produced an interesting result with First Past the Post produced an identical composition to PR. The Conservatives gained 5 seats; the Liberals gained 7 seats with the NDP gaining 2 seats.
5. Ontario would have obtained 42 Conservative seats instead of the 32 with FPP while the Liberals would have obtained 56 seats compared to the 81 obtained with FPP. The NDP would have obtained 20 seats instead of the 8 they obtained with FPP voting and where the Greens would have obtained 3 seats instead of the 0 seats that was produced by FPP voting.
6. Quebec would have obtained 13 Conservative seats instead of the 12 seats with FPP voting and the Liberals would have obtained 28 seats instead of the 40 seats produced by FPP voting. The NDP would have obtained 20 seats instead of the 16 received by FPP voting. The Greens would have received 2 seats instead of the 0 produced by FPP voting. The Bloc would have received 15 seats instead of the 10 provided by FPP.
7. New Brunswick would have obtained 3 Conservatives instead of the 0 produced by FPP and the Liberals would have obtained 5 seats instead of the 10 they won with FPP voting. The NDP would have obtained 2 seats instead of 0 produced by FPP and the Greens would have obtained 0 votes and also the same with PFF
8. Nova Scotia would have obtained 2 Conservative seats instead of the 0 with FPP and the Liberals would have obtained 7 seats instead of the 11 produced by FPP. The NDP would have obtained 2 seats instead of the 0 with FPP and the Greens would still without a seat. The Greens would have received 0 seats under both FPP and PR.
9. Prince Edward Island would have obtained 1 Conservative seat instead of the 0 seats with FPP and the Liberals would have obtained 2 seats instead of the 4 seats obtained under FPP. The NDP would have obtained 1 seat instead of the 0 seats under FPP. Again in PEI, there were not enough votes under FPP or PR to win a seat.
10. Newfoundland and Labrador would have obtained 1 conservative seat instead of the 0 produced by FPP while the Liberals would have generated 5 seats instead of the 7 with FPP and the NDP would have obtained 1 seat instead of 0 with FPP. The Greens obtained 0 seats under either regime.
11. The results in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are unchanged with one seat each.

In summarizing the national total result, in the 2015 election, 17,591,468 votes were cast, of which 9,106,936 went to Candidates that won the ridings. Fully 1,048,531 voters in Canada are NOT represented in the House of Commons by EITHER a candidate they voted for, or by a party they voted for in their own Province. This figure is reduced to 234,567 with the PR regime proposed.

On average under FPP, the winning party, the Liberals averaged 37,529 voters per seat, compared to 57,282 voters for each Conservative seat on average. The figure rises to 78,849 voters per NDP seat, and finally reaches 602,933 voters per seat for the Green Party. This figure for the Bloc was 82,114 per seat. On average with FPP, the average number of voters per seat was 171,742 voters per seat, with a standard deviation of 241,714 voters.

In contrast, with the PR proposed, these figures come more closely into balance, being 49,949 for the Liberals, 51,978 for the Conservatives, 51,782 for the NDP and being 66,993 for the Greens and 54,743 for the Bloc. On average the figure of the number of voters per seat worked out at 55,089 per seat with a dramatically reduced standard dev of just 6,871 voters across all the parties.

Thus with FPP we obtained the result of 185 seats for the Liberals, 98 seats for the Conservatives, 44 for the NDP, and 1 for the Green Party with 10 seats for the Bloc.

With this proposed PR, the results shift to the following for the Liberals at 139 and 108 for the Conservatives, 67 for the NDP, 9 for the Green Party and 15 for the Bloc.

These distortions in the FPP system have created a Liberal Majority Government with 185 seats when mathematically they should not have so many members and should have been limited to just 139 seats. A majority would consist of half of 338 seats, or 169 seats.

The most important outcome of this analysis is that PR achieved through an arrangement of declining plurality seat allocation, has dramatically improved the equality position for each elected Member of Parliament.

Coupled with a return to a “dynamically balanced House” where “confidence” must be maintained “continuously”, we would see a renewed interest in voter turnout BECAUSE every vote would count and every vote would make an incremental contribution to the final result.

OTHER REFORMS

1. An elected and recognized official should be recalled if 50% of the electorate in that constituency in the last election petition the Chief Electoral Officer to declare the seat vacant, thus forcing a Bi-election. In such a circumstance, removed representatives would be barred for running again in the Bi-election or any general election anywhere subsequent for one full election cycle.
2. Donations to political parties by individuals must be limited to an absolute cap per year per party and can only be made by Canadian citizens who are “real” persons, and NOT corporations or trade unions.
3. There should be severe penalties for foreigners who attempt to inject money into Canadian elections, and in particular, foreign directors, managers, or shareholders of companies should be banned from entry into Canada for a minimum of five years after the first offence and for life after the second offence.
4. Funding by government should be strictly limited to a per capita basis and paid ONLY to the local constituency association. Donations to political parties should only be available to local constituency associations, and direct donations to the party headquarters should be banned outright. We want to support “local constituency organizations” and we want to resist the centralizing tendency of political leadership of parties.

These are my respectful submissions that I hope will provide for a more democratic governance of Canada when my grandchildren become adults and participate in elections as informed adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and ideas.

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