

Electoral Reform – Solving the Wrong Problem

There has been an abundance of media coverage and debate on the need to, and how to, reform Canada's electoral process. Our "first past the post system" (FPTP) is the deemed problem. It is not the problem. The real problem is that there is a group is seeking to increase its influence by making the current FPTP system the "problem".

That "group" is those Canadian voters who place their votes for political parties that are not capable, worthy or chartered to run this great nation.

Consider this: Canada has been governed by either Liberal or Conservative parties since Confederation. While one may or may not like the particular party in power at any one time, we can all agree that these two groups have democratically built one of the greatest nations on Earth. Canadians can easily place both the Liberals and Conservatives in the category of nation builders.

Contrast that to the some of the other political parties. The Greens are, for lack of a better term, a limited issue party without the depth and breadth to run, let alone build, a nation. The Bloc Quebecois seeks to separate Quebec from the rest of Canada. That is not nation building, that is nation destroying. While the Liberals and Conservatives are nation builders, the NDP are effectively wealth redistributors. NDP policies based on the "the working class" do not build nations, they simply take from one pocket of society to give to another pocket of society. This is a prosperity killer which has been proven so by the one term governments in Nova Scotia, Ontario and soon to be Alberta.

Whenever I hear or read the grossly over-used line "how can we allow a party with a 40% popular vote to form a majority government?" or the equally over-worked "60% of the electorate voted against that government", I feel like throwing up over the misuse of the math. Over the various elections and changes in party popularities, consistently 70% or more of the electorate vote for the nation builders. This is typically the Liberals and Conservatives, but I will also grant that there are several great politicians in some of the other parties who are also nation builders.

Let's review the last election. About 70% of the votes were cast for the Liberals plus the Conservatives. Let's add another 10% for those top quality parliamentarians whose contributions to Canada exceed that of their affiliated platforms. Add it up, and 80% of Canadians voted for nation builders.

So, the question is not one of a 40% popular vote forming a majority government, nor one of 60% voting against the newly formed government. The question (and actually the problem) is why do so many voters cast their votes against nation building?

The "solutions" to the FPTP currently number only two. One is proportional representation and the other is ranked ballots. Both serve to move electoral power to those who vote away from the nation builders. This would have a clear and devastating cost for Canada.

Let's solve the real problem by taking away the passageway for errant votes. One method would be to disallow any party that does not have a charter that supports a unified Canada - this would clear out the Bloc from federal politics. Another way would be to disallow any party that would allow Quebec to separate with only a 50% +1 majority. The NDP would then have to change its charter. Another approach - if one votes for a party that does not garner 5% of the national vote, then that voter has to sit out an election.

I am sure that other Canadians can suggest many more and better ways to improve our system. The first step is recognizing that FPTP is not a problem at all, it is that the 20% of voters who want larger influence, but not nation building, are the problem.