

Brief submitted by: Gary Tupper

Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef has posited eight governing principles, but the act whittled these down to five principles which appear vaguer: Effectiveness and Legitimacy, Engagement, Accessibility and Inclusiveness, Integrity, and Local Representation.

Her original eight principles:

- 1: Canadians should believe that their intentions as voters are fairly translated into election results, without (the) significant distortion that often characterizes elections conducted under the first-past-the-post system.
- 2: Canadians' confidence needs to be restored — in their ability to influence politics and in their belief that their vote is meaningful.
- 3: Increase diversity in the House of Commons and politics more broadly
- 4: The chosen reform can't make the electoral system more complex
- 5: Voting needs to be more user-friendly and accessible
- 6: Maintain the vital local connection an MP has with their constituents
- 7: It needs to be secure and verifiable
- 8: Canadians need to be inspired to find common ground and consensus

I propose the following system: elections take place as currently executed, with no necessary change to ballot structure\*\*\*, riding representation, or riding boundaries. Thus satisfying principles 4, and 7. The candidate with the most votes would be that riding's member, which satisfies principle 6.

However, once the nation's votes have been tabulated, there will be an adjustment of the weight of each member's vote as follows: if we arbitrarily allocate 1000 as the total of the votes in the house, then the members of each party will share proportionally in the allocation of these votes. So, in the last federal election, the Liberals with 39.5% of the popular vote would share 395 of their votes equally amongst their 184 members. The Conservatives with 31.9% of the popular vote would share 319 of their votes amongst their 99 members and so on. Thus, each liberal's vote will have a weight of  $395/184 = 2.14$ . Each Conservative will have a weight of  $319/99 = 3.22$  and so on. The Green member would be allocated  $34/1 = 34$ . The Green member's vote would be approximately one tenth of the Conservative party's, which closely reflects the relative popularity of the two parties.

Such a system would clearly satisfy principles 1 and 2. Principle 3 (diversity) would be enhanced by voters no longer needing to vote "strategically"\*, since their vote *would make a difference* no matter who they have selected.

Principle 5, 'user-friendliness and accessibility' seems somewhat misplaced, since it would be most effectively dealt with at the polling station facilities rather than on any particular type of ballot or tabulation.

Security and verification (Principle 7) would remain as currently practiced by scrutineers, clerks, etc.

Principle 8, concerning common ground and consensus, will be achieved by the likely outcome of minority governments, which virtually demands cooperation and compromise between parties to achieve passage of legislation.

A likely criticism of the proposal above: some members votes will count more than others. However we should bear in mind that under current majority governments, by whipping the vote, the government members' votes are the only ones that count **at all**. In a system such as proposed above, a

possible outcome might well be an increase in the diversity of representation, due to elimination of the need for strategic voting.\*

Is a method as outlined above likely to be considered by the House committee? Probably not, for the simple reason that it is not presently in use in any other jurisdiction\*\* and stepping outside of the box is risky.

#### 2015 Federal Election Results

	number of seats / %	% of popular vote
Liberal:	184 / 54.4%	39.5%
Conservative:	99 / 29.3%	31.9%
NDP:	44 / 13.0%	19.7%
BQ:	10 / 3.0%	4.7%
Green:	<u>1</u> / 0.3%	3.4%
	338	

\* of which there are two varieties: voting for X to prevent the election of Y, and voting for X because one perceives that X is more likely to win than the preferred Z.

\*\* although it is used by the European Union Council, and closer to home, by Boards of Directors.

\*\*\* although one could conceive of a ballot with 2 columns: one being the candidates, the other being the parties: would enable a voter to distinguish between a local representative, and a party preference.