A Brief Regarding Suggestions for Electoral Reform

Submitted by

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A. Representation in Parliament

I recommend a system of Multi-member Plurality in which current constituencies/ridings would be combined in regional clusters to form ridings/constituencies with several members. Each party could nominate as many candidates as they wished up to the number of members that will represent that riding.

For example, all of the ridings in the City of Calgary would be combined to form a riding with 10 members of parliament. Voters would vote for only one candidate on the ballot for that riding. The 10 candidates with the most votes would become the members of parliament for the Calgary Riding.

As an Albertan who has lived in various parts of the province from the far Northwest to Medicine Hat in the Southeast, I believe Alberta could be fairly split into 4 or 5 ridings. The province of PEI would become a single multi-member riding.

In addition to the current ridings, I recommend the creation of Members of Parliament at Large. Each registered political party would be entitled to one Member of Parliament at Large for each 5% of the popular vote they earned. The popular vote could be determined by either a second ballot for voting for political parties or by the number of votes their candidates received in the election. If the second option is chosen, if independent candidates earn more than 5% of the popular vote, then the independent candidate with the most votes would become a Member of Parliament at Large.

The Members of Parliament at Large would be the losing candidates for each party who received the most votes.

The advantages of these recommendations include:
1. Election of candidates with the greatest support in a region, hopefully leading to highly qualified members of parliament;
2. Relatively simple creation of new ridings using existing boundaries;
3. Increased emphasis on individual candidates;
4. Continued local representation;
5. Fair opportunity for all political views with substantial voter support to be represented in parliament;
6. Closer approximation to popular support without trivializing the importance of the qualifications of individual candidates;
7. Reduced sense/feeling of particular regions "belonging" to particular political parties;
8. Identification of a few members of parliament as available to anyone in the country who shares their political views – strengthening of a feeling of being Canadian.

B. Nominating Rules for Candidates for Members of Parliament

I believe it is important for candidates to represent and come from their ridings. I would ban the power of the leaders of political parties to install/nominate "star candidates". The national parties should have the right to deny the acceptability of a candidate based on previously stated party policies, but not the right to choose local candidates.

C. Compulsory Voting Law

The Australian model seems to be working well. I would argue in favour of adopting their model of compulsory voting.

D. Referendum for Electoral Reform

I believe the current members of parliament were given a
    mandate to change our system (Liberal, ND and Green parties
    all openly supported the call for electoral reform), and failure to
    accept their mandate would be a rejection of the desire of
    voters for change. The change could come with a sunset
    clause in which 9 years after the first national election using its
    implementation a national referendum would be called to ratify
    the system or reject it. If rejected, it would provide the
    parliament of the time 3 years to develop a new system.