Submitted by : Michael Beaudoin

To : ERRE

I would like to add my input into the question of electoral reforms. I know that the current "First Past the Post System" is not perfect (leading parties who have less than 50% of the national vote to have a majority in Parliament), however, I feel that this system is better than some of the other options available. A proportional distribution of seats sounds very fair, however the problem is that with that system, the people representing me in Parliament have no loyalty to me - they are chosen by the party. In that case, if my MP votes for something I do not believe in, me calling them up and telling them so means nothing, they were chosen by the party, not by me. Even with a mixed proportional system, there are people sitting in parliament with no accountability except to the party. My candidate's vote becomes less valuable as there are other party loyalists voting at the same time, also making my vote worth less. I do not like the idea of people sitting in parliament with no direct accountability to voters. Each member should be directly representing people, and if they choose not to listen to the people they represent, then the people can choose not to vote for the member.

With regards to a ranked voting system, it would make the process of voting and counting votes more difficult. There is already issues with convincing people to get out and vote as well as ensuring that votes are counted properly and anything that complicates this really should be avoided. Keep it as simple as possible. Having a second round (or more) of voting will simply lead to an even more dragged out election, and this should be avoided also.

One option to make the entire system more fair would be to have one house (Parliament or Senate) a First Past the Post and have to other house a Proportional Representation. I would have Parliament remain First Past the Post and reform the Senate to the latter. The main issue with this is that the function of the Senate would have to be modified so that you do not have two houses competing with each other over bills. If the Senate were to be elected, it would have legitimacy to vote on bills and contradict Parliament. To avoid this, the Senate could be given a very well defined mandate - to approve or reject (send back to Parliament) bills and make recommendations. Make the Senate a body that can not create or edit bills themselves - be a place of 'Sober Second Thought'. In a scenario where the Senate refuses to pass a bill and Parliament refuses to change the bill, the Governor General could then be called in to make a ruling (either choosing a side, dissolving one or two house(s), or striking down the bill).

With a legitimate and functioning (as well as can be) Senate. It can also be given the role of political appointments with Parliamentary approval. Senate committees could be used to put forward candidates for positions like the Governor General, Supreme Court Judges, Heads of Crown Corporations, etc. These appointments could be made inside the Senate and then voted on by Parliament. This would hopefully remove some of the partisanship and controversy that surrounds the selection of these roles. Again, in cases of a refusal of co-operation between the two houses a mechanism could be put in place (potentially the Governor General making a choice, or perhaps the Lieutenant Governors voting for the Governor General).

I do hope that you will take my views into consideration and I thank you for taking the time to read this.

Regards,

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