Defending a "False Alternative": Canada's Electoral System and a Proposal for Reform

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Abstract:

The single-member plurality voting system – where Members of Parliament are elected by winning a plurality of the vote in their respective constituencies – has been a fixture of Canada's electoral system for generations. It has been credited for its simplicity, as well as for ensuring strong local representation and producing stable governments capable of advancing their legislative agendas. These features are desirable and worthy of protection. But as this essay argues, Canada's voting system must also be seen as a contributor to outcomes that are detrimental to Canadian democracy.

By drawing from Canada's past experience with electoral reform, as well as case studies from British Columbia, Ontario, New Zealand and Scotland, this paper calls for the adoption of parallel voting system in Canada – with 80% of Members elected via first-past-the-post and 20% elected via party lists on the basis of the party vote in each province. It argues that implementing such a model would be consistent with constitutional constraints and would address the most serious shortcomings of the existing system. It would also provide political incumbents with an incentive to support reform, by offering their parties the prospect of seats in provinces where they are currently underrepresented, without undermining their ability to win a majority government in the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A CENTURY OF ELECTORAL REFORM IN CANADA

1919: *"To do this, parliament ought to recognize two principles in the new distribution of seats, namely, representation by population, and proportional representation as well."*[1]

1924: *"A parliamentary committee in the last Parliament made an inquiry into proportional representation. The question was again debated last session. The single transferable vote is a step in the direction of proportional representation."*[2]

1935: *"The Liberal Party stands for electoral laws which will ensure a true Parliamentary representation of the Canadian people..."*[3]

1943: *"This redistribution measure is a regular event every ten years, required by constitution. But there is no reason why legislation dealing with elections and parliamentary representation should be confined to a redrafting of the boundaries of constituencies. Indeed, the occasion for redistribution should be, and is, an opportune time for electoral reform aimed at obtaining a better representation of national opinion."*[4]

1953: *"There is a growing tendency to place in Parliament candidates who have been elected by minority [sic] of those voting, and if this tendency continues the result may well be that the wishes of the voters will go unrecognized. [...] The method best suited to bring about the election of the most acceptable candidates is the single transferable vote."*[5]

1962: *"Under Canada's present electoral system, it takes more city voters than rural to elect a member of parliament."*[6]

1979: *"[The Prime Minister] may conclude that what's needed is an element of 'proportional representation' to counter such distortion. It would go against old custom in Canada, where the tally of seats won has been traditional, but it may be necessary to face up to it all the same."*[7]

1980: *"[He] deplored the one-party dominance of the province – as did most of the other editorialists. He insisted that a measure of proportional representation should be integrated into the Canadian electoral system to correct the distortion and disequilibrium that inevitably results from the present set-up."*[8]

1999: *"Frustrated opposition parties say Canada should consider adopting proportional representation to cope with an increasingly fractured, multi-party system."*[9]

2003: *"The need for reform of our electoral system has never been more dramatic"*[10]

INTRODUCTION:

Any of the ten preceding excerpts would not look out of place in a current Canadian newspaper. But instead, they are drawn from Canadian newspapers in each of the past ten decades. The issue of electoral reform in Canada is far from new and debates on the merits of alternative voting systems have been ongoing for more than a century. As well they should. It is essential that democratic processes are periodically reviewed to ensure that they uphold the values and principles to which we collectively aspire. However what is most remarkable, in light of the amount of ink that has been spilt on electoral reform in Canada, is how resilient our current voting system has proven to be.

Supporters of single-member plurality (or first-past-the-post) would argue that there is good reason for this. Our current system has served us well for generations, is easy for voters to understand and has a tendency of producing stable governments capable of advancing their legislative agendas. First-past-the-post systems have also been credited with excluding extremist parties from representation, producing a coherent opposition and forging strong geographic links between elected representatives and their constituents.[11]

Not surprisingly, critics of Canada's electoral system see things very differently. Many find the discrepancy between a party's share of the vote and the number of seats it is allocated to be wholly undemocratic. They lament the fact that parties with concentrated regional support are often rewarded at the expense of parties with diffuse national support. They have also blamed Canada's voting system for, among other things: exacerbating regional differences, encouraging an adversarial style of politics and contributing to the underrepresentation of women, minorities and Aboriginal peoples in the House of Commons.[12] Many of these same critics are also proponents of alternative voting systems – such as proportional representation (PR), mixed-

member proportional representation (MMP) or the single transferable vote (STV) – which are alleged to be improvements over the status quo.

One of the more vocal proponents of electoral reform in Canada has been Dennis Pilon, Associate Professor at York University, who, in his book *The Politics of Voting: Reforming Canada's Electoral System*, argued: "...there are no compelling democratic arguments for the retention of our single-member plurality (SMP) voting system and that the needs of our modern divided polity require some form of proportional representation."[13] He also dismissed calls for Canada to adopt a mixed electoral system (i.e. one which allocates some seats proportionally, but does not produce a fully proportional legislature) by calling them "false alternatives" which "...fail to address the problems of plurality or match the promise of PR."[14]

Over the course of this paper, this argument will be called into question and challenged. It will be argued that the adoption of a parallel electoral system in Canada – also known as a supplementary member system (SM) or a mixed member majoritarian system (MMM)) – would address the most serious shortcomings of Canada's electoral system, without replacing them with a new set of challenges. It will also be argued that unlike many electoral reform proposals that have been put forward, the adoption of a parallel electoral system in Canada would be consistent with current political and constitutional constraints.

In order to expand upon these arguments, the approach of this paper will be threefold. First, the essay will provide a brief overview of Canada's electoral system and the reasons why electoral reform is needed today. Next, the paper will examine both Canada's past experience with electoral reform, as well as reform proposals that have been proposed or implemented at either the provincial or international level. British Columbia, Ontario, New Zealand and Scotland will be used as case studies in this regard. These particular systems were chosen because they are

products of the Westminster parliamentary tradition, they have recently experimented with voting system reform and they are commonly cited as examples of electoral reform that Canada may wish to learn from or emulate. Third, by drawing from many of the positive features of these systems, a parallel electoral system will be proposed for Canada. This system would see 80% of seats in the House of Commons elected via first-past-the-post and 20% of seats elected proportionally, on the basis of the party vote in each province. Simulations will also be used, not to show what the results would have been, but rather to demonstrate how alternative voting systems would operate, using 2011 general election results and different methods of seat allocation.

CANADA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM:

With the notable exception of Canada's first-past-the-post voting system – where Members of Parliament are elected by winning a plurality of the vote in their respective ridings – the history of Canada's electoral system has been one of adaptation, compromise and reform. At the Quebec Conference in October 1864, the delegation from Prince Edward Island and the other Fathers of Confederation were at odds over how many seats the Island should be allocated in the new Dominion of Canada. Colonel John Hamilton Gray of Prince Edward Island argued: "the provision of five members is unsatisfactory," because it would be impossible to divide five members between the Island's three counties.[15] William Henry Pope echoed this sentiment, arguing that "nature, as well as the original settlement of the Island, has made three counties, and it would give rise to much difficulty if we had to adjust five members to the three counties."[16] Robert B. Dickey of Nova Scotia proposed a solution where one member would be given to each county, one member would be assigned to Charlottetown and one member would be elected by the Island as a whole. But Mr. Pope insisted that "religious feeling in Prince Edward Island runs

very high. The Protestants outnumber the Roman Catholics and in consequence the fifth member as proposed by Mr. Dickey would not represent the Roman Catholics."[17]

Equally steadfast in his convictions was Toronto journalist and politician George Brown, who maintained: "it is obvious we cannot depart from the principle of representation by population."[18] He argued that if Prince Edward Island was given the six members it desired, the House of Commons would have to rise to 230, creating a legislature that would be "altogether too large."[19] Alexander Galt of the Province of Canada agreed, stating: "if the principle is good it is the same for all, and we could not defend the action of giving 13,000 in Prince Edward Island a member where it requires 17,000 in any other province for that purpose. It would be indefensible."[20]

Prince Edward Island would only join Confederation in 1873 and at the time the *British North America Act* was signed in 1867, it was agreed that representation by population would form the basis for seat allocation in Canada. Initially, this was achieved by dividing the population of each province by a fixed number known as the 'electoral quota' or 'quotient'. This number was calculated by dividing the population of Quebec by 65, because the province had been guaranteed that it would receive the same number of seats as it had in the pre-Confederation Province of Canada legislature (65).[21] It was also agreed that seat allocation would be recalculated every ten years following the decennial census, beginning with the census of 1871.[22] The one exception to this formula was the so-called one-twentieth rule, which guaranteed that a province could not lose seats following a decennial census, unless its share of the national population had diminished by at least 5% between the last two censuses.[23]

Initially this method of seat allocation proved to be effective, but in 1892 the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island lost a total of four seats.[24] Prince

Edward Island then lost even more seats following the 1903 redistribution, provoking it to challenge Canada's method of redistribution before the Supreme Court. The province argued that it was entitled to the same number of seats it had when it joined Confederation. The Court disagreed, upholding the principle of representation by population and refusing to grant an exception for Prince Edward Island.[25]

Despite Prince Edward Island's defeat, a constitutional amendment was proposed in 1914 to protect Canada's smaller provinces from losing even more seats. The amendment, known as the senatorial clause, deviated from the principle of representation by population by guaranteeing that provinces could not have fewer seats in the House of Commons than they did in the Senate.[26] The amendment was adopted and remains in effect today.

Over the course of the twentieth century, several alternative methods of redistribution were proposed and implemented. In 1946, the one-twentieth clause was abolished and seats were allocated on the basis of Canada's total population.[27] In 1952, this formula was tweaked again by adding a provision that no province could lose more than 15% of the seats it was awarded in the previous redistribution.[28] Provinces were also protected from having fewer seats than a province with a smaller population. Then in 1972, a complex model known as the amalgam formula was adopted, once again using Quebec as the baseline for determining seat distribution. The formula was applied only once, in 1976, after it was determined that continued use of the formula would result in a large and ever-expanding House of Commons.[29] This prompted the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to study the issue and eventually resulted in the *Representation Act, 1985*, which came into force in 1986 and remains the formula used for seat redistribution today.

As stipulated in section 51(1), rule 1 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, "there shall be assigned to each province a number of members equal to the number obtained by dividing the population of the province by the electoral quotient and rounding up any fractional remainder to one."[30] The electoral quotient, as outlined in section 51(1), rule 6(b), is "the number obtained by multiplying the electoral quotient that was applied in the preceding readjustment by the number that is the average of the numbers obtained by dividing the population of each province by the population of the province as at July 1 of the year of the preceding decennial census [...] and rounding up any fractional remainder of that multiplication to one."[31] The *Representation Act, 1985* also added an extra provision, colloquially known as the grandfather clause, which states that no province can have fewer seats in the House of Commons than it did when the *Representation Act, 1985* came into force.[32] Together, the grandfather clause and the senatorial clause represent the two sharpest deviations from the principle of representation by population in Canada's method of seat distribution.

Similar examples of Canada's electoral system adapting in response to changing circumstances can be seen in the development of more stringent campaign laws and the gradual extension of the franchise from the late nineteenth century onwards. In the years immediately following Confederation, it was agreed that "control of the federal franchise would remain a provincial matter until Parliament decided otherwise."[33] The result was an uneven and often inequitable application of electoral law, where corruption, discrimination and voter intimidation were systemic. In an effort to address this, the Liberal government passed two election laws shortly after their victory 1874. Among other provisions, these laws required all votes to be cast by secret ballot and for elections to be held on the same day in all constituencies.[34] Then in 1885, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald centralized control of the federal franchise by passing

the *Electoral Franchise Act*. The law stipulated that voters must be male, over the age of 21 and British subjects either by birth or by naturalization. The Act also retained a property-based qualification, which varied depending on whether the voter lived in an urban or rural riding.[35] At the time, MacDonald wrote: "I consider the passage of the Franchise Bill the greatest triumph of my life."[36] The *Electoral Franchise Act* proved to be short-lived, however, and a new electoral law which decentralized control of the federal franchise back to the provinces was passed by the government of Sir Wilfred Laurier in 1898.[37]

Over the course of the twentieth century, the franchise was gradually extended to previously marginalized groups, albeit not always in a linear and uniform way. In the lead-up to the 1917 federal election, Sir Robert Borden passed two controversial election laws with the intent of enfranchising voters who were likely to be sympathetic to his party. The first, known as the *Military Voters Act*, extended the franchise to any current or retired member of the Canadian Armed Forces – including Indians and those under the age of 21.[38] This also included approximately 2,000 female military nurses. The second, known as the *War-time Elections Act*, disenfranchised conscientious objectors, while simultaneously enfranchising many of the spouses, sisters, daughters and widows of those serving, or of those who had served, abroad.[39]

By this time, suffragette movements had formed and had succeeded in extending the franchise in: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and British Columbia, under the leadership of women like Nellie McClung and Flora Macdonald Denison.[40] The federal government eventually followed suit: first, by passing the *Act to confer the Electoral Franchise upon women* in May 1918 – which extended the franchise to women who met the same eligibility requirements as men – then, by allowing women to run for federal office, and finally by passing

legislation in 1920 which "provided universal access to the vote without reference to property ownership or other exclusionary requirements."[41]

But of course women were not the only group to have been excluded from the franchise. Racial based discrimination against Canadians of Chinese, Japanese and South Asian origin was enshrined in the *Dominions Election Act* of 1920 and persisted until June 1948, "when Parliament deleted the reference to discrimination in the franchise on the basis of race."[42]

Canada's Aboriginal peoples also had a long path towards full enfranchisement. In the years immediately following Confederation, members of First Nations in most parts of Canada were entitled to vote, but only if they relinquished their Aboriginal status, which very few were willing to do.[43] In 1934, a provision in *The Dominion Franchise Act* explicitly excluded Inuit and members of First Nations living on reserves from voting in federal elections.[44] For Inuit this was overturned in 1950, although many in Canada's eastern Arctic did not have access to a polling station until the election of 1962.[45] In the case of First Nations, a provision allowing members to vote without relinquishing their status was only adopted in March 1960.[46]

In light of these seismic shifts in Canada's method of seat distribution, federal campaign law and the extension of the franchise, the stability of Canada's single-member plurality voting system is all the more remarkable. At the time of Confederation, Canada was divided into 181 single-member constituencies, in accordance with Westminster parliamentary tradition.[47] This number has since grown to 308 constituencies, and will rise to 338 after the next redistribution takes effect. In all cases, the individual elected is the candidate who wins a plurality, but not necessarily a majority, of all votes cast in a particular riding. This process has been compared to horse race, where the winning candidate is the one who crosses the finish line first – hence the 'first-past-the-post' metaphor.[48] Voters are given one ballot and are asked to make a mark next to

the candidate of their choice. The party with the most number of members elected to the House of Commons is typically given the first opportunity to form a Government, with the leader of that party becoming the Prime Minister. Parties in Canada typically govern alone and formal coalition or confidence-and-supply arrangements are rare.

It should also be acknowledged that a limited number of dual-member constituencies existed in Canada until 1966. Proponents of electoral reform often cite this fact as evidence that first-past-the-post has not always been an entrenched component of Canada's electoral system. For example, Dennis Pilon argued that the abolition of multi-member constituencies in 1966 demonstrates that "Canada didn't settle on SMP [single-member plurality] until many years after Confederation."[49] However this point cannot be overstated. As explained by author John Courtney, only ten federal ridings ever experimented with dual-member elections, which is a very small percentage of all Canadian constituencies.[50] Moreover, the adoption of dual-member elections was done for the specific reason of responding to religious polarization at the local level. By allowing these ridings to elect two representatives instead of one, it "...ensured that each party nominated a Roman Catholic and a Protestant candidate."[51] Dual-member elections never posed a threat to the dominance of single-member plurality and it would be unfair to characterize them as anything more than anomalies, driven by local pressures at particular moments in time.

WHY IS ELECTORAL REFORM NEEDED IN CANADA?

Given that single-member plurality has been a fixture of Canada's electoral system for generations, some may question why any kind of reform is needed today. It must also be

acknowledged that electoral reform is simply not a priority for many, if not most citizens. But as this section will argue, Canada's voting system should be of concern to all Canadians.

Before examining why this is the case, it must be acknowledged that Canada's first-past-the-post system has many features that are desirable and worthy of protection. First, Canada's voting system creates strong geographic links between Members of Parliament and their constituents. This ensures that local issues can be raised at the federal level and it guarantees that representatives are held accountable by the voters of their riding.[52] One of the most common charges laid against alternative voting systems – such as list proportional and mixed-member proportional systems – is that they weaken these geographic ties, creating a new class of parliamentarian who is accountable only to his or her party.[53] That being said, support for local representation is not universal. For example, Dennis Pilon argued: "most commentators on reform, pro and con, accept that local representation is terribly important in Canadian elections. Yet there is precious little evidence to support this view."[54] However it seems likely that Pilon's critique of local representation is driven more by his preference for alternative voting systems – many of which sacrifice local representation for proportionality – than it is by any objections he has to the principle itself. It is also unlikely, given Canada's tradition of local representation in the House of Commons, that an alternative system which severed the geographic link between representatives and constituents would be embraced by the Canadian political establishment.

A second advantage of the single-member plurality system is that it is easily understood by the average voter.[55] On Election Day, voters are simply asked to make a mark next to the candidate of their choice. This makes voting accessible to citizens with even the most basic literacy skills. It is also easy for election officials to count the ballots and for citizens to track the

results as they come in. The idea that the candidate who receives the most votes wins is simple, transparent and is a principle that is familiar to almost every Canadian.

First-past-the-post systems also tend to produce stable and effective governments capable of advancing their legislative agendas.[56] Typically, this is the result of the governing party winning a share of seats that is high enough to allow it to govern alone, without the support of smaller parties. An advantage of this arrangement is that political parties typically do not have to resort to backroom dealings after an election is held to determine who the governing party, or parties, will be. This is common in some countries that have adopted proportional or semi-proportional systems.[57] Single-party governments also minimize political gridlock and there are relatively few cases of the 'tail wagging the dog', where the governing party is forced to give major concessions to small parties in exchange for their support. This is especially true when there is a majority government. It has also been suggested by some commentators that Canadians are more comfortable with one-party majority governments than any other type of governing arrangement.[58]

However others have challenged this assumption and have found that for many Canadians, minority and coalition governments actually have "a positive connotation, expressed as the desirability to put an end to adversarial politics and force parties and politicians to 'work together'."[59] While there is no doubt that this reflects the views of many Canadians, it almost certain that any electoral reform proposal which eliminated, or significantly reduced the likelihood of a party winning a majority government, would be met by fierce opposition from politicians on both sides of the House who strive to be in that very position. Proponents of reform often dismiss these likely objections, but as noted by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "even when there is huge popular distrust and

dissatisfaction with the political system, change still needs to be agreed by the current holders of power."[60]

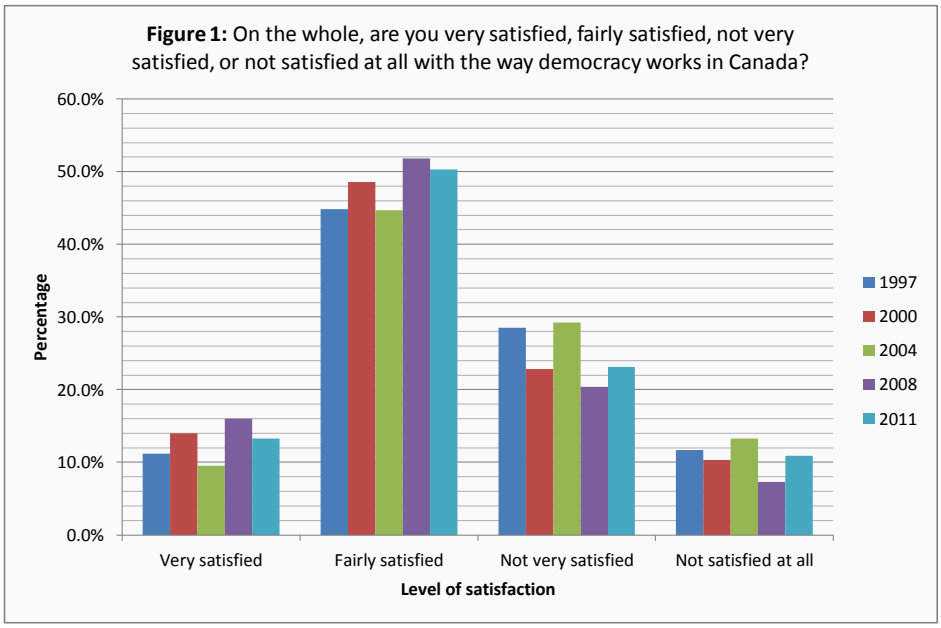
A fourth advantage of the single-member plurality system is that it tends to exclude extremist parties from representation.[61] In order to win a seat in the House of Commons, a party must have a candidate win a plurality of the vote in one riding. Given that the support for extremist parties is typically not concentrated in one geographic area, the barriers to entry for these parties are high.

Lastly, the first-past-the-post system is credited with producing a coherent opposition to the governing party. This allows the government's legislative agenda to be challenged and it provides voters with a clear alternative to the party in power.[62] It has also been suggested that first-past-the-post systems give voters the ability to "throw the rascals out," by replacing an unpopular government at the next election.[63] In proportional systems, where each party is virtually guaranteed of winning a core number of seats, dramatic swings from one election to the next are less likely.

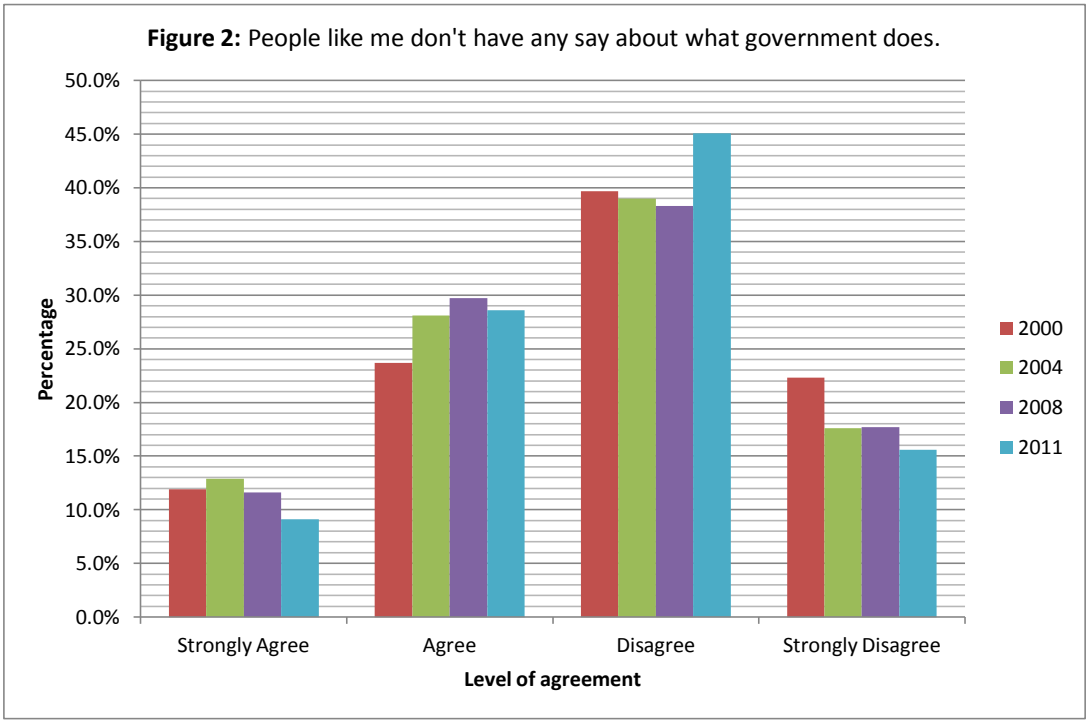
However despite these advantages (or disadvantages, depending on one's point of view) Canada's first-past-the-post system must also be seen as a contributor to outcomes that are detrimental to Canadian democracy.

First, Canada's single-member plurality system has been accused of facilitating a 'democratic malaise' in this country. Broadly speaking, this can be defined as "a term that refers to the disparity in power and influence between political decision makers, on one hand, and citizens, on the other."[64] Its symptoms include, among other things: low voter turnout, increased cynicism and youth disengagement from traditional forms of political participation.[65]

Before addressing whether Canada's voting system is to blame for these feelings of dissatisfaction, it is important to assess whether Canada is indeed in the midst of a democratic malaise. This, in large part, depends on which indicators are used to measure civic discontent and disengagement in this country. On a positive note, a majority of Canadians in each of the past five Canadian Election Studies have expressed satisfaction with the way democracy works in Canada (Figure 1). A majority of Canadians have also rejected the idea that people like them have little say about what government does (Figure 2).

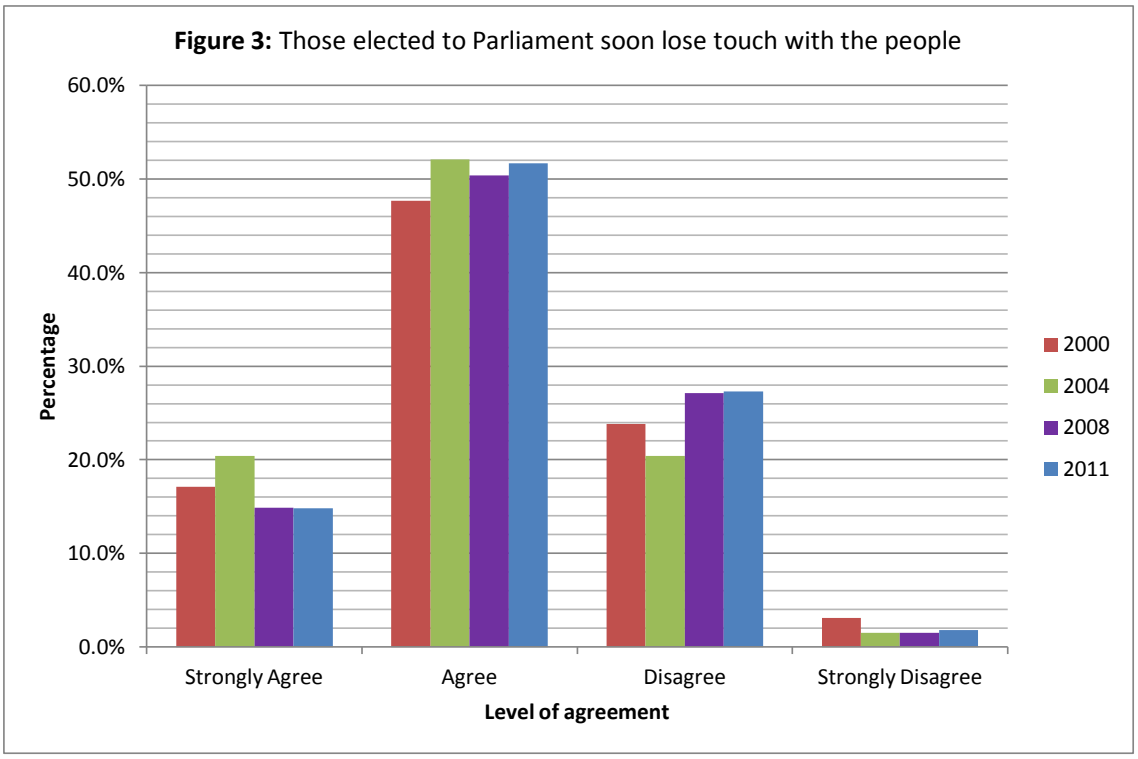


***Sources**: The 2011 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2008 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2004 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2000 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 1997 Canadian Election Study. [dataset].*



***Sources**: The 2011 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2008 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2004 Canadian Election Study. [dataset]; The 2000 Canadian Election Study. [dataset].*

However other indicators appear to show a greater cause for concern. As displayed in Figure 3, a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people." Voter turnout rates in federal elections have also been on a downward trend since 1988, reaching an all-time low of 58.8% in 2008 (Figure 4). These numbers are even more discouraging when looking at youth voter turnout. Yet paradoxically, 98.1% of respondents in the 2011 Canadian Election Study indicated that it was "important" for Canadians to vote in elections and 92.3% of respondents felt that low voter turnout "weakened" Canadian democracy.[66]



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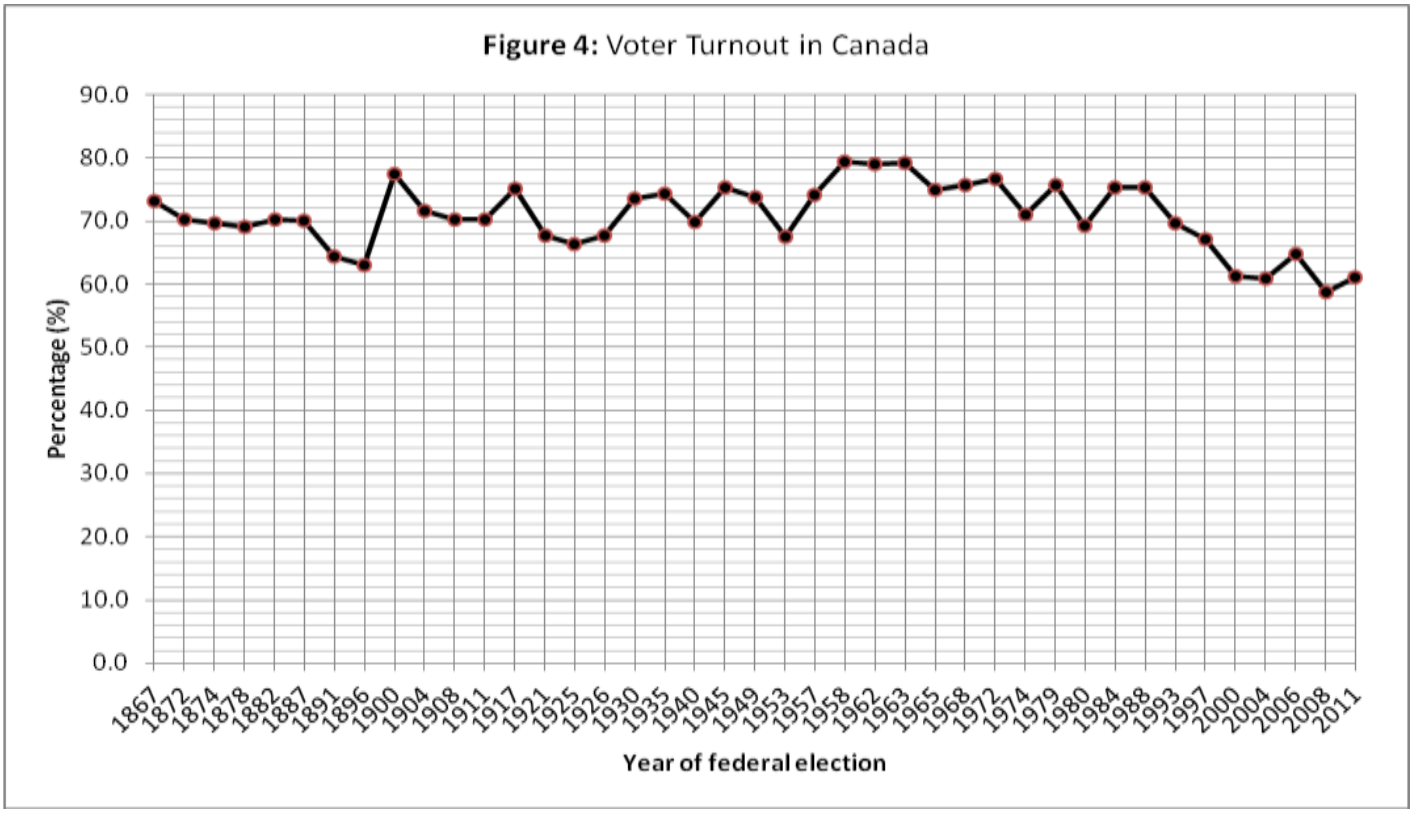

***Source**: Elections Canada. Voter Turnout at Federal Elections and Referendums. Online resource.*

The breadth and severity of Canada's democratic malaise can certainly be debated, but it is undeniable that many Canadians do feel a sense of disengagement or disillusionment vis-à-vis their political leaders and institutions. It is also clear that Canada's voting system is not solely to blame. However as explained by Heather MacIvor in her article: 'Proportional and Semi-Proportional Electoral Systems: Their Potential Effects on Canadian Politics', "while it would be absurd to blame these problems [of voter cynicism and disengagement] on the current electoral system, it would be equally absurd to argue that the system has not exacerbated them."[67]

A second weakness of Canada's voting system, outlined in Alan Cairns' influential 1968 article, 'The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada', is that it disproportionately rewards parties with concentrated regional support at the expense of parties with diffuse national support.[68] This is because a party's share of the national vote is of little importance, compared a party's ability to win a plurality of the vote in specific ridings. To exaggerate this point, if a party finished a close second in every riding across the country, it would secure no representation in the House of Commons. But if a party won a plurality of the vote in just one or several adjacent constituencies, it could have no support every other riding and it would still be guaranteed representation.

Historically, this has been to the benefit of parties like the Social Credit Party of Canada, which consistently won a share of seats in the House of Commons that was higher than its share of the popular vote.[69] This was due to the party being able to capitalize on concentrated levels of support in parts of Western Canada. More recently, the Bloc Québécois has been a beneficiary – the 2011 federal election notwithstanding – due to concentrated support in many parts of Quebec. Following the 1993 election, the party even won enough seats to form the Official Opposition. As author John Courtney recalled: "with the second largest number of seats in

Parliament, a party dedicated to dismantling the country was suddenly thrust into the role of serving as Official Opposition even though it won fewer votes than either Reform or the Conservatives."[70]

Conversely, parties like the New Democratic Party (NDP) and its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) have consistently fallen victim to the first-past-the-post system. In every election from 1935 to 2008, the CCF/NDP won a share of seats that was lower than its share of the popular vote.[71] This was due to the party's support being spread across the country, but not necessarily in the numbers needed to win a plurality of the votes in specific ridings. More recently, the Green Party has struggled to secure any representation in the House of Commons, despite having a fairly broad support base across the country. In 2001, this prompted then Green Party leader Joan Russow to challenge the constitutionality of Canada's voting laws.[72] It also resulted in 2011 campaign strategy, characterized by some as an attempt to elect leader Elizabeth May at the expense of running a national campaign.[73] May was successful, defeating Conservative incumbent Gary Lunn in the riding of Saanich–Gulf Islands, but national support for the party fell from 6.8% in 2008 to 3.9% in 2011.[74]

The impact of rewarding regional parties with concentrated support at the expense of national parties with diffuse support can also be seen at a much broader level. According to Alan Cairns, by disproportionately rewarding parties with regional support, "the electoral system has consistently exaggerated the significance of cleavages demarcated by sectional/provincial boundaries and has thus tended to transform contests between parties into contests between sections/provinces."[75] As a result, Cairns argued: "it is self-evident" that the effects of Canada's electoral system can "...appropriately be described as detrimental to national unity."[76] In the same article, Cairns also criticized the winner-take-all nature of Canada's first-past-the-post

system, suggesting that it "...has undervalued the partisan diversity within each section/province" and has "...rendered the parliamentary composition of each party less representative of the sectional interests in the political system than is the party electorate from which that representation is derived."[77] More than three decades later, Edmonton resident Harvey Voogd made a similar argument at a 2003 public consultation on electoral reform, stating:

> The West is not just right wing. Not all Quebecers want to separate. Every citizen who lives in Ontario is not a Liberal and it isn't only Atlantic Canada that supports the Progressive Conservatives or the NDP. But out present voting system certainly suggests that is true. If these perceptions were harmless, I would have no quibble. But these myths have lives of their own and destructively influence Canadians' perceptions of each other.[78]

A third weakness of Canada's voting system is that it results in an inordinate number of 'wasted' votes or 'wasted' ballots. In a first-past-the-post system, it is inevitable that a large number of votes will be cast for losing candidates. The problem, as explained by the Law Commission of Canada, is that "...unless a voter supports the winning candidate in a given riding, there is no connection between the voter's choice and the eventual make-up of the House of Commons."[79] This differs from a proportional system, where every vote is used to determine a party's share of the popular vote and, by extension, the number of seats it will be allocated in the legislature. In the 2011 Canadian federal election, nearly 7.3 million (or 49.6%) of the 14.7 million votes cast went toward candidates who lost in their riding.[80]

According to Dennis Pilon, the problem of 'wasted' votes represents an irredeemable flaw of all plurality voting systems. In his book, Pilon wrote: "people trot out to the polls on Election Day with a purpose in mind: to see their votes contribute to the election of a representative that in some way reflects their views about politics. But with plurality voting, many needn't bother."[81] The implication is that voters who support candidates unlikely to win have little reason to vote, because their choices are unlikely to be reflected in the final composition of the House of Commons. Furthermore, in mid-2011 it was announced that the per-

vote subsidy previously awarded to federal political parties would be eliminated by 2015-2016.[82] It could be argued that this provides a further disincentive for supporters of candidates unlikely to win to cast a vote in their riding.

A fourth disadvantage of the single-member plurality system is that it can contribute to the underrepresentation of women, Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities in the House of Commons. As outlined in the 2004 report *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform in Canada*, "in the first-past-the-post 'winner takes all' system, parties attempt to maximize their chances of success by running the 'safest' candidates possible, that is, candidates that the party believes will win a plurality of the vote. Therefore, women and minority candidates are not readily nominated."[83]

A similar argument was put forward by Donley Studlar in his article 'Will Canada Seriously Consider Electoral System Reform? Women and Aboriginals Should'. In it, Studlar claimed that "on a worldwide basis, there is little doubt that FPTP [first-past-the-post] is an obstacle to greater legislative representation of women."[84] He found that at the time of writing (1999), there was a mean of 23.5% female legislators in party list proportional representation systems, compared to 17.8% in mixed-member proportional or mixed systems and just 16.8% in first-past-the-post systems.[85] A 2004 publication from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance found an even sharper discrepancy, observing that the percentage of female legislators was nearly double in established democracies using some form of proportional representation, compared to those using first-past-the-post (27.6% to 14.4%).[86] As for Aboriginal peoples, Studlar claimed that they too would be "...likely to benefit from a more proportional system," as he speculated that a large number of Aboriginal candidates would be nominated via party lists.[87]

That being said, some have challenged the idea that the underrepresentation of women, Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities can be used as justification for electoral reform in Canada. For example, conservative commentator Tom Flanagan has argued that "trying to sell electoral reform as affirmative action, at a time when affirmative action is on the way out as a public policy, will hurt its chances of ever being adopted."[88]

A fifth potential weakness of the single-member plurality system is that it tends to reward the governing party, by giving it a share of seats that is disproportionate to its share of the popular vote. This 'seat bonus' is often enough to give the party of the majority of the seats in the legislature, despite the fact that a party seldom wins the majority of the popular vote. In fact, in the 24 federal elections since the CCF/NDP first ran candidates in 1935, there have been 15 majority governments.[89] But in just four cases did the governing party also win a majority of the popular vote: the Mulroney Government in 1984, the Diefenbaker Government in 1958, the St. Laurent Government in 1949 and the King Government in 1940.[90]

An advantage of these 'false majorities' – where the governing party wins a majority of the seats but a minority of the popular vote – is that they produce stable and effective governments. It must also be remembered that Canadians elect Members of Parliament, not parties or Prime Ministers. As a result, the term 'false majority' is a misnomer, in that it implies these majority governments are somehow less legitimate than others. However a voting system that facilitates majority governments also has drawbacks. Critics have long argued that Canada's tradition of one-party majority governments has left opposition parties "...with few options but to attack and criticize other parties' positions, thereby contributing to a culture of adversarial politics."[91] It remains an open debate as to whether the benefits of false majorities outweigh the cons.

A sixth disadvantage of the first-past-the-post system is that it can leave large parts of the country unrepresented or underrepresented in the governing caucus and cabinet. By extension, this can lead to a "sense of alienation and exclusion from power."[92] Perhaps the clearest example of this can be seen with the 1980 federal election, when Prime Minister Trudeau won a majority government, despite not having won a seat west of Manitoba.[93] More recently, Prime Minister Harper was able to form a Government despite not having won a seat in any of Canada's three largest urban centres: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. It is believed that this was a major factor in his decision to appoint Montreal businessman Michael Fortier to the Senate, and subsequently to Cabinet, in 2006.[94]

A seventh weakness of the single-member plurality system is that it can encourage parties to campaign only the in ridings they consider to be 'winnable'. This relegates a large number of 'safe' ridings to the margins of federal election campaigns, as the vast amount of time, money and energy will inevitably be spent elsewhere, where a party's investments will have the biggest impact. Parties may also be inclined to sacrifice unifying themes and messages, in order to appeal to undecided voters in specific battlegrounds.

An eighth limitation of Canada's voting system is that ridings can be susceptible to vote splitting when three or more candidates are contesting the seat.[95] In these cases, two similar candidates may draw support from common pool of voters, allowing a third dissimilar candidate to 'come up the middle' and win the seat. For example, suppose that candidates representing Party A and Party B run on similar platforms and receive 35% and 25% of the vote, respectively. If a candidate representing Party C runs on a very different platform and wins 40% of the vote, he or she will win the seat, despite the fact that 65% of the voters in the riding likely oppose the

winner's platform. This possibility has led some commentators to call for a preferential ballot, where a voter's second (and third, etc.) choices could be taken into consideration.[96]

A final danger of single-member plurality is that it can encourage strategic or tactical voting and distort a party's true level of support. For instance, suppose a supporter of a small party feels as though their riding has become a two-way race and their preferred candidate is unlikely to win. Rather than vote for their preferred candidate, the supporter may vote for one of the top two candidates who he or she considers to be the 'lesser of two evils'. However as noted by Dennis Pilon, "the end result is a self-fulfilling prophecy," because the voter's true preference will never get recorded.[97]

In an effort to reduce these outcomes, several vote swapping or vote pairing websites have even been established in Canada, facilitated in large part by social media.[98] The purpose of these sites is to connect two voters who pledge to vote a candidate they do not support, in exchange for their counterpart pledging to vote for a candidate that they do support. The point of such an exercise is to allow a voter who feels as though their preferred party has no chance of winning in their home riding to have their vote, in effect, cast by proxy in a riding where they believe it will have more of an impact. Not surprisingly, the legality of vote swapping has been questioned, but in September 2008 Elections Canada ruled that it was permissible.[99] However, the agency also issued a strong warning suggesting that voters who engage in vote swapping could easily be duped or misled.

Given these disadvantages inherent to Canada's first-past-the-post system, it should come as little surprise that there have been recurring calls for reform since the early twentieth century. However despite the volume of proposals and the well-established body of evidence showing the destructive effects of the first-past-the-post system, Canada's voting system has remained

unchanged. A closer examination of these past proposals is therefore necessary to better understand the barriers to reform and to develop a proposal that stands a reasonable chance of being adopted.

HISTORY OF ELECTORAL REFORM IN CANADA:

Initial attempts at electoral reform in Canada were driven less by grandiose visions of improving democracy than they were by a fear of the 'other' gaining power and influence. For example, with the emergence of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in the early 1930s, many in Canada's political establishment clamoured for electoral reform as a way to suppress the party's rise. These arguments took an even greater urgency after the CCF was able to form the Official Opposition in the provincial legislatures of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario.[100] In an editorial published by the Vancouver Sun in February 1943, an anonymous writer warned that Canada's new three-party landscape could no longer guarantee that the will of the majority would be respected. The author gave the example of British Columbia, suggesting that "a majority of voters have shown themselves again and again opposed to the Socialism of the C.C.F. But if the anti-socialist majority is split at the next election, the C.C.F. and Socialism may win against the will of the people as a whole."[101] As a result, the author proposed that Canada adopt a preferential ballot, which would elect "the man on whom the community most agrees."[102] Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King also proposed that Canada adopt the alternative vote, but the idea was later abandoned.[103]

Where electoral reform gained more traction in the early to mid twentieth century was at the provincial and municipal level. Following the First World War, progressive and united farmers' parties in Western Canada made electoral reform a central plank of their party

platforms. This resulted in proportional representation being adopted for municipal elections in all four Western provinces.[104] Alberta and Manitoba went even further, pursuing electoral reform at the provincial level as well. In both cases, the alternative vote – where voters rank candidates in single-member constituencies – was adopted for rural ridings and the single transferable vote – where voters rank candidates in multi-member constituencies – was adopted for urban ridings.[105] Both systems remained in place from the 1920s until the 1950s when, according to University of British Columbia professor Campbell Sharman, the governing parties determined that "...a reversion to first-past-the-post would better suit [their] likelihood of electoral success."[106] British Columbia also experimented with the alternative vote, implementing it for its 1952 provincial election. However this was a blatant attempt by the ruling Liberal-Conservative coalition to mitigate the popularity of the CCF, and the province reverted back to single-member plurality immediately after the election.[107]

At the federal level, Prime Minister Trudeau established The Task Force on Canadian Unity in 1978 "to make recommendations for dealing with perceived threats to Canada's survival as a nation."[108] The task force, led by Jean-Luc Pépin and John P. Robarts, saw electoral reform as a comparatively minor issue, but the topic still features heavily in the Commission's final report. In volume two, *A Time to Speak: The Views of the Public*, the report noted that "the 'winner take all' electoral system was criticized [by the public] because it 'exaggerates and distorts regional differences' and 'forces parties to make invidious distinctions between constituencies', paying more attention to some, where they have a chance to win, than to others."[109] The Pépin-Robarts Commission also observed that "the most frequently proposed substitutes to the present system [...] were variants of proportional representation."[110] If this were

implemented, the report speculated: "today's concern, that votes cast for a losing candidate are wasted votes, would be erased."[111]

In volume three, *A Future Together: Observations and Recommendations*, the Pépin-Robarts Commission followed their synopsis of public opinion by stating that: "the regional polarization of federal political parties corrodes federal unity. Because we see developing signs of such a situation in Canada we have come to the conclusion that electoral reform is urgent and of very high priority."[112] As for specific reforms, the Task Force proposed increasing the size of the House of Commons by approximately 60 members. The additional seats would then be allocated to parties on the basis of their share of the popular vote.[113] Parties would then fill these seats with candidates they had nominated via closed party lists.

In 1980, the Pépin-Robarts report was followed with a line in the Speech from the Throne pledging to establish "a committee of Parliament to examine the electoral system in order to ensure that the highest degree of representativeness and responsibility is achieved and that the confidence of Canadians in parliamentary institutions in strengthened."[114] But in the end this committee was never established, as opposition to even modest reforms proved to be fierce."[115]

The next Commission to study electoral reform, albeit indirectly, was the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development for Canada, chaired by former Minister of Finance Donald S. MacDonald. The mandate of the Commission was "to investigate the challenges confronting the Canadian federation and its regions in the rapidly changing global economy."[116] In volume three of the Commission's 1985 report, MacDonald stressed that the "national government must have a capacity to respond to regionalism."[117] With this in mind, the Commission recommended that "...either reform of the Senate or, our second choice, reform of the electoral system of the House of Commons is necessary to [meet this objective]."[118] The

specific proposal put forward by the MacDonald Commission called for the establishment of an elected Senate, with the distribution of seats weighted in favour of the smaller provinces.[119] According to the Commission, "the most successful accommodation of regional interests in the formation of national policy requires a modification of the majoritarian principle of representation by population."[120]

Finally, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing – more commonly known as the Lortie Commission – was established by the Mulroney government in 1989. Its purpose was "to inquire into and report on the appropriate principles and processes that should govern the election of members of the House of Commons and the financing of political parties and of candidates' campaigns."[121] However to the disappointment of many, the Lortie Commission decided from the outset that it was not going to consider alternative voting systems in its analysis.[122] Instead, the Royal Commission recommended that "...the current representation system, with members of the House of Commons elected from single-member constituencies, be maintained."[123] Despite this, the Lortie Commission did make recommendations on a number of issues integral to Canada's electoral system, including: voter registration, political financing, electoral boundaries and voting accessibility. The Commission also made a series of recommendations regarding Aboriginal political participation. Of particular note to voting system reform, the Lortie Commission found: "there is a compelling case for changing the *Canada Elections Act* to guarantee Aboriginal voters the right to create Aboriginal constituencies in one or more provinces where numbers warrant."[124]

In the past decade, debates on electoral reform have shifted outside the realm of government-appointed commissions. In 2003, the New Democratic Party (NDP) sponsored a motion that would have allowed Canadians to vote on whether Canada should adopt a more

proportional system. The vote was defeated by a margin of 144 to 76, but according to the Law Commission of Canada, it "[signalled] a growing recognition of the need to seriously consider the merits of electoral reform."[125]

Then in November 2004, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was asked to "recommend a process that engages citizens and parliamentarians in an examination of our electoral system with a review of all options."[126] This resulted in the 43rd report of the Standing Committee, which called for the establishment of both a citizens' consultation group and a special committee in the House of Commons to "consider and make recommendations on strengthening and modernizing [Canada's] democratic and electoral systems."[127] The Government issued a response thanking the Standing Committee for its recommendations, but stated it could not "…accept the timeframe for the process that has been recommended."[128]

More than two years later, Catherine Bell (NDP – Vancouver Island North) attempted to resurrect the recommendations of the Standing Committee by proposing Motion No. 262 in the House of Commons. The motion, put forward in February 2007, called for the establishment of a special committee "to continue the work on electoral reform as outlined in the 43rd Report of the Standing Committee […] and to make further recommendations on strengthening and modernizing the democratic and electoral systems."[129] Bell concluded her statement introducing the motion by saying: "the makeup of our Parliament should reflect the will of the voters and the diversity that is Canada. The time has come to change our electoral system for the better. Everyone matters. Every vote should count."[130] However despite the appeal, the motion was defeated in April 2007.

Since this time, voting system reform has been discussed infrequently in the House of Commons. However in the context of debating the *Fair Representation Act* – which will see the

House of Commons expand to 338 members – Kennedy Stewart (NDP – Burnaby-Douglas) asked: "why has the government not looked at the issue of proportional representation and when it will give Canadians a chance to discuss real electoral reform?"[131] Bruce Hyer (Independent – Thunder Bay-Superior) has also made statements in support of proportional voting systems, as has Green Party leader Elizabeth May.[132] But as recently as June 2012, the Honourable Tim Uppal, Minister of State for Democratic Reform stated: "when Canadians were asked about proportional representation, they rejected the idea and preferred our current system."[133]

In terms of recent discussions on electoral reform, it should also be noted that Canada's voting system was a high profile issue in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race. Joyce Murray, leadership candidate and Member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra, made greater cooperation among centre-left parties a key pillar of her campaign strategy. Meanwhile eventual winner Justin Trudeau, Member of Parliament for Papineau, came out in favour of the preferential ballot.[134]

It remains to be seen what the impact of these latest proposals will be, but if the dormant recommendations of Pépin-Robarts Commission, the MacDonald Commission, the Lortie Commission and Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs are any indication, they too will face steep opposition. Canadian political incumbents, who by definition are victors of the existing system, have consistently proven to be resistant to change. As a result, it is worth considering how certain provincial and international jurisdictions have managed to overcome similar barriers to reform.

PROVINCIAL MODELS:

British Columbia:

The event that served as the catalyst for electoral reform in British Columbia was undoubtedly the province's 1996 general election. In it, the New Democratic Party (NDP) won a majority government (39 out of 75 seats) with 39.5% of the popular vote. Meanwhile the Liberal Party became the Official Opposition (33 out of 75 seats), despite winning 42% of the popular vote. The BC Reform Party won just two seats with 9.3% of the vote and the Progressive Democratic Alliance won just one seat with 5.8% of the vote.[135]

These distortions, combined with the fact that the 'wrong' party won, led to the formation of two notable advocacy groups: the Electoral Change Coalition and Fair Voting BC. Then at the BC Liberal Party Convention in April 1999, Liberal Party leader Gordon Campbell committed to electoral reform by promising that should the party form the next government, an independent Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform would be established "…to review and publicly debate all the options for electoral reform – from the status quo, to preferential ballot, to proportional representation."[136] Campbell continued by saying: "…at the end of the day, if the Assembly recommends changes to our electoral system, those changes will be put to the people, by way of referendum."[137]

In the 2001 provincial election, the BC Liberal Party did return to power. However critics alleged that their enthusiasm for electoral reform had waned after they secured a majority government.[138] Nonetheless, in September 2002 the Government commissioned Gordon Gibson, former BC Liberal Party leader, to make recommendations on how to establish a Citizens' Assembly. Among other recommendations, Gibson proposed that the Assembly be made up of between 79 to 100 voting members.[139]

In April and May 2003, the BC legislature established the Citizens' Assembly in accordance with Gibson's recommendations, with two notable exceptions. First, the size of the Assembly was increased to 158, in order to include a male and a female from each electorate in the province.[140] Two additional seats were later added to represent Aboriginal interests. Second, the threshold for passing any electoral reform proposal via referendum was raised to 60% of the votes, with majority support in 60% or more of the existing electoral districts.[141] A total of $5.5 million was allocated to the Assembly and its mandate, according to the Order-in-Council passed in May 2003, was to "assess models for electing Member of the Legislative Assembly and issue a report recommending whether the current model for these elections should be retained or another model should be adopted."[142]

After a lengthy selection process, the Assembly's work was divided into three stages: the learning phase, the public hearings phase and the deliberations phase. In the learning phase, members heard presentations from invited experts and academics. This was followed by question and answer periods and group discussions. In the public hearings phase, the Assembly hosted 50 meetings and heard proposals from 387 citizens.[143] It also received over 1,600 written submissions. Finally in the deliberations phase, the Assembly heard nine additional presentations, selected as the best out of those heard in the learning phase. The Assembly then narrowed down the list of potential electoral systems and settled on mixed-member proportional (MMP) and single-transferable vote (STV) as their top two alternatives to first-past-the-post.[144]

With mixed-member proportional, approximately 50% of representatives in the legislature (although it can be more or less) are elected via first-past-the-post. That is, there are single-member constituencies and whichever candidate wins a plurality of the vote is awarded the seat. The rest of the representatives are elected via party lists, on the basis of a party's share

of the popular vote. Voters in mixed-member proportional systems are given two votes: one for their constituency representative and one for the party of their choice. It is the second vote (the party vote) that determines how many seats each party will be allocated in the legislature. For example, suppose there is a 100 seat legislature with seats awarded on the basis of MMP (50% single-member constituency seats and 50% party list seats). If Party A wins 35% of the party vote, it will be entitled to 35 seats in the legislature. So if Party A already won 25 single-member constituency seats, it will be awarded ten additional 'top-up' seats, so that its share of seats in the legislature (35/100) corresponds to its share of the party vote (35%).

In the case of the single-transferable vote, the territory is divided into multi-member constituencies. Unlike first-past-the-post, candidates from the same party may compete against each other in the same riding. Voters are then asked to rank as many, or as few, candidates as they wish in order of preference. In order to be elected, a candidate must win more votes than the 'quota' that is established in each multi-member constituency. This quota that is most widely used is the Droop quota, which is the number of votes divided by the number of seats plus one.[145] If a candidate receives votes in excess of this quota, the votes are then redistributed in accordance with the voters' second choice, and so on. The process continues until every seat in the multi-member constituency has been filled.

At the end of the deliberations phase, the BC Citizens' Assembly decided it would recommend the single-transferable vote as British Columbia's alternative to single-member plurality.[146] According to its final report, this was the result of the Assembly being "convinced" that the single-transferable vote "…best incorporates the values of fair election results, effective local representation, and greater voter choice."[147] The specific system put forward was labeled the British Columbia single-transferable vote, or BC-STV. It called for multi-member

constituencies to be established with a district magnitude (i.e. number of representatives per riding) of at least two for rural ridings and four to seven for urban ridings. The Droop quota was to be used as the formula for determining the number of votes needed to be elected in each constituency.[148]

The referendum question put to voters in May 2005 was: "do you agree that British Columbians change to BC-STV as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform?"[149] In the end, 57.7% of voters supported the change and the proposal received more than 50% support in 77 of British Columbia's 79 constituencies.[150] However because the 'yes' vote did not surpass the 60% threshold, the referendum was defeated. In 2009, the proposal was put to another referendum – albeit with a slightly different question – and was soundly defeated, with nearly 61% of voters choosing the existing system over BC-STV.[151]

Perhaps the biggest flaw of BC-STV is that while it produces proportional legislatures, it is thoroughly bewildering to the average voter. As John Ibitson remarked in a tongue-in-cheek article published in *The Globe and Mail*, "only 17 people in the world fully understand how STV works."[152] This sense of confusion is also reflected in the polling conducted in British Columbia prior to the referendum. A poll commissioned by the Strategic Council on May 9-11 – just one week before the vote – found that 82% of voters knew little or nothing about BC-STV.[153] However despite this, more than 57% of voters voted in favour of BC-STV just days later. This would seem to indicate that while British Columbians had an appetite for electoral reform, they had little idea what system they were actually voting for.

But confusion aside, there are also flaws with the BC-STV model itself that should prevent it from ever being exported to the federal level. First, allowing parties to nominate more than one candidate for the same constituency is a recipe for political infighting and conflict. This

would not be conducive to effective democratic governance in Canada. Second, by creating multi-member constituencies, the size of each riding would have to increase dramatically. In a country as large as Canada, with rural ridings that are already vast, this could jeopardize the geographic link between Members of Parliament and their constituents. Third, implementing BC-STV would virtually eliminate the possibility of one party winning a majority government. This point is acknowledged by the Citizens' Assembly itself, which stated in its final report that while majority governments would not be impossible under BC-STV, "the province's history suggests that governments under the new system will likely be a minority or a coalition of two or more parties."[154] By extension, this could have repercussions for the stability and effectiveness of government.

Ontario:

Much like British Columbia, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty initiated a process of electoral reform by pledging to establish an Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (OCA) in November 2004. However according to authors Lawrence Leduc, Heather Bastedo and Catherine Baquero, "it was never entirely clear whether the McGuinty government's initiative was driven by a desire to reform the electoral system, or by an interest in experimenting with a new model of citizen deliberation – or both."[155] Whatever the reason, from June to November 2005, an all-party Select Committee on Electoral Reform was established to study draft the terms and reference for a new Citizens' Assembly. In March 2006 the Assembly was formally established, with George Thomson, a former judge and deputy minister, appointed as its Chair. Similar to British Columbia, a double threshold was established, with Ontarians needing to vote 60% in favour and have majority support in 60% of Ontario's existing electoral districts for a referendum to pass.[156]

Also like British Columbia, the work of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform was divided into three stages. In the learning phase, members heard from invited speakers. These included experts, academics, as well as a member from each political party represented in the Ontario legislature.[157] In the consultation phase held from November 2006 to January 2007, the Assembly held 41 public consultation meetings and received over 2,100 written submissions.[158] Lastly in the deliberations phase, Assembly participants "…overwhelmingly settled on mixed member proportional (MMP) and chose single transferable vote (STV) as a distant second choice."[159]

As for why Ontario settled on MMP when British Columbia chose STV, Leduc, Bastedo and Baquero speculated that this was due in part to a presentation delivered in the learning phase by New Zealand academic Elizabeth McLeay. As will be discussed in the next section, McLeay spoke of the country's recent switch to MMP, which "...brought empirical rather than purely theoretical evidence into the discussions."[160] Many Assembly members also felt that MMP better addressed the concerns raised by the public in the consultation phase.[161]

The specific electoral system proposed by the Ontario Citizens' Assembly called for a 129 seat legislature (a 22 seat increase) with 90 members elected via single-member plurality (70%) and 39 members elected via closed party lists on a 'top-up' basis (30%).[162] As is the case with other MMP systems, Ontario voters would be given two votes: one for their preferred local representative and one for the political party of their choice. The party vote would be used to determine how many seats each party would be allocated in the Ontario legislature. The formula proposed to allocate these 'top-up' seats was the Hare formula, which is more commonly associated with single-transferable vote systems. The Hare formula takes the total number of party votes cast and divides it by the total number of seats in the legislature. This quotient is

called the quota. A party's total number of party votes is then divided by this quota to determine how many seats it will be awarded in the legislature.[163] This number is rounded down to the nearest whole number, with any remaining seats allocated on the basis of which party has the largest remainder. The Ontario Citizens' Assembly also recommended implementing a 3% threshold that a party must surpass for it to be awarded any 'top-up' seats.[164]

Unlike British Columbia, the referendum question that was put to voters was not a simple yes or no question. Instead, it asked voters to choose between 'the existing electoral system' and 'the alternative electoral system proposed by the Citizens' Assembly'. The result was a clear defeat for MMP, with 63.1% of voters choosing to the first-past-the post system. Only five out of Ontario's 107 ridings had a majority vote in favour of MMP, all of which were located in the Toronto area.[165]

However the results of Ontario's referendum should not be mistaken as a sign that Canadians have rejected electoral reform. Instead, much of the blame for MMP's defeat can be placed on Ontario's electoral reform campaign itself. First, Elections Ontario interpreted its mandate to facilitate a public awareness campaign very narrowly, "telling voters though various advertising vehicles that their vote in the referendum was 'important', but encouraging them to seek information on the proposal elsewhere."[166] This meant that many voters knew little about their choices at the time the referendum was held. Second, the Ontario Citizens' Assembly did a very poor job of making themselves, and their recommendations, known to the public. The products it released – including a 30 page final report and a nine minute video – were lengthy, dense and unapproachable, and a poll conducted immediately after the Assembly released its final report found that four in five Ontarians had heard "little or nothing" about the Assembly or its recommendation.[167] Third, a study conducted by Leduc, Bastedo and Baquero found that

media coverage of Ontario's referendum was overwhelmingly negative.[168] For example, Jeffrey Simpson wrote an article entitled: "Electoral reform? Chill the beer, pass the ketchup", where he suggested that electoral reform was simply not a priority for most Ontarians.[169] This type of coverage may have coloured Ontarians' opinion of MMP, even before they had the opportunity to learn about the system.

That being said, the defeat of MMP cannot be blamed solely on the media and a poor public awareness campaign. There were also serious flaws with Ontario's MMP model itself. First, the 3% threshold for awarding 'top-up' seats was rightly criticized for being too low.[170] While it is admirable to promote greater political diversity in the legislature, a 3% threshold could be low enough to encourage party fragmentation and allow extremist parties to gain representation. Second, the Hare formula is complex and it would be difficult for voters to track how their party vote was translated into list seats. Third, having 30% of representatives elected via party lists on a 'top-up' basis would almost guarantee perpetual minority or coalition governments. This would be a significant departure from the type of government Ontarians are accustomed to and, as previously mentioned, it could have ramifications for the stability and effectiveness of government. Lastly, Canadians have little appetite to increase the size of their legislatures. If anything, many would like to see them reduced. As a result, the recommendation to increase the size of Ontario's legislature may have prevented some voters from even considering the strengths of MMP.

INTERNATIONAL MODELS:

Having examined two provinces where voting system reform was proposed, we may now look at two international case studies where reform was implemented. New Zealand and

Scotland were chosen as case studies for three primary reasons. First, they have both recently implemented proportional voting systems. Second, they are both products of the Westminster parliamentary tradition. As a result, their experiences with electoral reform may be more applicable to Canada than the experiences of other countries. And third, both New Zealand and Scotland are frequently cited in the literature on Canadian electoral reform as voting systems that Canada may wish to emulate.

New Zealand:

Much like British Columbia, the path to electoral reform in New Zealand was instigated by unusual election results. In 1978, National won 39.8% of the popular vote and was awarded 55% of the seats in the House of Representatives. Meanwhile Labour won 40.4% of the popular vote and was awarded 43% of the seats. The Social Credit Party also suffered, winning just one seat for its 16% of the popular vote.[171] Then in the 1981 general election, National won 51% of the seats with 39.8% of the vote; Labour won 43% of the seats with 39% of the vote; and Social Credit won just two seats despite winning 21% of the popular vote.[172]

The abnormal results in two consecutive elections prompted the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Electoral System. After a thorough review, the Commission released a surprisingly bold 1986 report, which called for New Zealand to adopt a mixed-member proportional system, based on the German model. Among its advantages, the report noted that MMP "…retains single-member constituencies, yet overcomes the disproportionality between parties that is inherent in plurality voting."[173] It also suggested that "the use of [party] lists allows the possibility of enhanced representation for minority and other special interests."[174]

According to political scientists Raymond Miller and Pierce Lane, the Royal Commission's recommendations would likely have been ignored had it not been for the

tumultuous political climate at the time.[175] The Labour Government of Prime Minister David Lange (1984-1989) was in the process of implementing sweeping economic reforms and public support for political institutions had fallen to all-time lows. For example, a 1988 poll found that just 10% of New Zealanders had a favourable opinion of Parliament.[176] As a result, when New Zealand's two main political parties initially came out against the Royal Commission's recommendations, Miller and Lane wrote, somewhat facetiously, that "the success of MMP was assured."[177]

However New Zealand's commitment to electoral reform only became certain after two bizarre political moves. First, in the 1987 televised leaders' debate, Labour Prime Minister David Lange surprised everyone by promising a referendum on electoral reform. Lange would later claim that he misread his notes.[178] Then in 1989, with the Labour Government proving unable to push the issue of electoral reform forward, the National Party came out in favour of a referendum. According to New Zealand academic Peter Aimer, this decision was "perplexing" and a "serious error in judgement," considering that National was well ahead in the polls and there was little support for the policy within the party.[179] Nonetheless, from this point forward both of New Zealand's main political parties had expressed support for a referendum.

The first referendum asked voters two questions and was held in 1992. The first question asked whether voters wanted to keep the existing first-past-the-post system, or whether they wanted to change the electoral system. By a surprisingly high margin (nearly 85% to 15%), voters expressed a desire to change the electoral system.[180] The second question asked voters to indicate their preferred voting system out of four options: mixed-member proportional, single-transferable vote, supplementary member and the alternative vote. A clear majority (nearly 65%) supported the Royal Commission's recommendation and chose mixed-member proportional.[181]

Fuelled by these results, a second binding referendum on electoral reform was held in conjunction with New Zealand's General Election in 1993. Despite a strong and well-funded anti-MMP campaign, voters chose MMP over first-past-the-post by a margin of 54% to 46%.[182] As a result, MMP was implemented ahead of New Zealand's 1996 General Election. In November 2011, voters were asked whether New Zealand should retain its MMP voting system, with nearly 58% voting in favour.[183]

New Zealand's MMP model features 70 representatives elected via first-past-the-post in single-member constituencies. This includes seven representatives who are elected in separate Māori electorates. New Zealand has had at least four Māori seats since 1867 and Māori voters have been permitted choose whether they wish to participate in the Māori roll or the General roll since 1975.[184] An additional 50 representatives are elected via closed party lists, although this number can be higher under special circumstances. For example, if a party won 15% of the party vote, it would be entitled to 18 seats in New Zealand's 120 seat legislature (15%). But suppose this party had concentrated regional support and was able to win 20 single-member plurality electorates. Rather than force the party to give up its two extra seats, New Zealand allows parties to keep these seats and the size of the House of Representatives is temporarily expanded. These extra seats are called overhang seats.

All of New Zealand's party list seats are allocated in proportion to a party's share of the party vote using the Sainte-Laguë formula.[185] This formula takes a party's total number of votes and divides it by successive odd numbers (1, 3, 5, etc.). If there are five list seats to assign, the five highest quotients will determine which parties will win the seat. But with MMP, the number of electorate seats won must also be taken into consideration. So if Party A already won two electorate seats, its highest quotient would be its number of party votes divided by five. The

quotients obtained by dividing the party's vote by one and three would be discarded, because they represent the two seats already won. This scenario is illustrated below, with the crossed-out numbers representing the electorate seats won and the red numbers showing the five highest quotients. The numbers in brackets show the order in which seats were assigned. So in this example, the first list seat would be assigned to Party B, because 600 votes is the highest quotient. The remaining four seats would be assigned in the following order: Party B (200), Party A (180), Party C (150) and Party A (128.6). The D'Hondt method is a common alternative to the Sainte-Laguë formula. It operates in a very similar way, but it divides a party's total number of votes by consecutive numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) instead of odd numbers, providing a slight bias to larger parties.[186]

Example 1:

	/1	/3	/5	/7	/9
Party A	~~900 votes~~	~~300~~	**180 (3)**	**128.6 (5)**	100
Party B	**600 votes (1)**	**200 (2)**	120	85.7	66.6
Party C	**150 votes (4)**	50	30	21.4	16.6

It should also be noted that unlike Ontario, New Zealand had a very strong public awareness campaign to educate voters on their choice of voting systems. A cartoon-like 'orange guy' appeared in many advertisements, explaining the features of alternative voting systems in several short and easy-to-understand videos.[187] Another advertisement leading up to the 1992 and 1993 referenda compared proportional voting systems to cutting pieces of cake, in an attempt to make electoral systems more accessible to the general public.[188]

However despite the strengths of New Zealand's MMP system, it should not be adopted in Canada for several reasons. First, if Canada were to adopt the same proportion of list seats to constituency seats as New Zealand, the size of ridings would have to increase dramatically. This is less of an issue in a country the size of New Zealand, where a relatively small number of

constituency representatives can still guarantee effective local representation. Second, Canada would be unable to adopt any system with the possibility of overhang seats. As outlined by the Law Commission of Canada, such a scenario could give a province a share of seats that is no longer proportionate to its share of the population. And as stipulated in Section 42(1)(a) of the *Constitution Act*, any change to the principle of proportionate representation would require the approval of at least two-thirds of the provinces with at least 50% of the country's population.[189] Third, in an MMP system, parties often have to resort to backroom dealings after an election to determine who will form the next government. In New Zealand's first MMP election in 1996, this process dragged on for weeks and only ended when New Zealand First Leader, Winston Peters, broke his promise to never form a coalition with National.[190] This is a characteristic of New Zealand's voting system that Canada would be wise to not to inherit.

Scotland:

The final voting system that will be considered here is the one used to elect Members of the Scottish Parliament. In 1973, the United Kingdom's Royal Commission on the Constitution recommended that "the legislative competence be devolved to Scotland."[191] This led to the enactment of the *Scotland Act 1978*, which sought to devolve certain areas governance to a new Scottish Parliament. However in order to be implemented, the *Scotland Act* required the support of at least 40% of the total Scottish electorate. In a subsequent referendum, a slim majority of voters supported the devolution plan, but with low voter turnout, this amounted to only 32.5% of Scotland's total electorate. As a result, the *Scotland Act* was repealed.[192]

Despite this defeat, the advocacy group Campaign for a Scottish Parliament continued to fight for devolution. In 1989, the Campaign recommended that a Scottish Constitutional Convention be established "to make plans for the future governance of Scotland."[193] This

Convention was formed and culminated in the report: *Scotland's Parliament: Scotland's Right*, which contained a blueprint for devolution and was released on St. Andrew's Day in 1995. The report proved to be influential and in July 1997, the UK Labour Party released a White Paper which acknowledged the work of the Convention and mapped out a path for Scottish devolution.[194] This was followed by a referendum in September 1997 which asked voters whether a Scottish Parliament should be established. Unlike the 1979 referendum, a clear majority of voters (74.3%) expressed their support for a Scottish Parliament and enacting legislation received Royal Assent in November 1998.[195]

The issue of how representatives should be elected in a new Scottish legislature was first addressed by the aforementioned Scottish Constitutional Convention. The Convention's two main participants, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, were initially at odds over which voting system should be implemented. Labour preferred the traditional first-past-the-post model while the Liberal Democrats favoured the single-transferable-vote.[196] The compromise, as outlined in *Scotland's Parliament: Scotland's Right*, proved to be a variation of the Additional Member System (AMS). This is nearly identical to a mixed-member proportional system, except that it eliminates the possibility of overhang seats.[197]

Another crucial difference between Scotland's voting system and most MMP systems is how the party list seats are awarded. In Scotland, the territory is divided into 73 single-member constituencies, with members elected via first-past-the-post. In addition, seven party list seats are assigned to each of Scotland's eight Euro-constituencies, for a total of 56 seats. Voters are given two votes: one for the local representative of their choice and one for their preferred party. The 56 party list seats are then assigned on the basis of a party's share of the party vote in each of the

eight Euro-constituencies. This differs from New Zealand, where party list seats are allocated based on a party's share of the national vote.

The calculation for awarding list seats in Scotland's eight Euro-constituencies is fairly straightforward. The number party votes cast for a party is divided by the number of constituency seats won by the party in the region, plus one.[198] The seat is awarded to the party with the highest quotient and the process continues until all seven of the Euro-constituency list seats are awarded. A hypothetical example of the Scottish formula, in a fictional region with six constituency seats and three party lists to be assigned, is shown in the example below.

Example 2:

	Party A	**Party B**	**Party C**	**List seat awarded to**
Party votes won in the region	1,000	800	600	
Constituencies won in the region	3	2	1	
Divisor 1 (constituency seats +1)	4	3	2	
Result 1	250	266.6	**300**	Party C
Divisor 2	4	3	2 + 1 (3)	
Result 2	250	**266.6**	200	Party B
Divisor 3	4	3 + 1 (4)	3	
Result 3	**250**	200	200	Party A
Total List Seats	1	1	1	

***Note**: Format of this table inspired by: Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada, p. 97.*

The Scottish model has many features that make it appealing for Canada. First, Scotland's method of assigning party list seats to its Euro-constituencies is comparable to how Canada would have to allocate party list seats by province in order to be compliant with section 42(1)(a), section 51(1) and section 51(a) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* (the principle of proportionate representation, the grandfather clause and the senatorial clause, respectively). Second, Scotland's method of party list seat allocation, which eliminates the possibility of

overhang seats, makes its implementation in Canada far more likely than a mixed-member proportional system which could not guarantee that the principle of proportionate representation by province would be upheld.

That being said, Scotland's additional member system is also plagued with many of the same issues as other proportional systems. Namely, by allocating party list seats based on how many constituency seats a party has already won, there is a decreased probability of a one-party government. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that there has been just one majority government in Scotland since 1999.[199] While some may welcome this as a sign that parties would be forced to work together, it can also lead to negative outcomes, as discussed in previous sections. Reducing the number of constituency seats in order to make room for party list seats can also have implications for local representation. This is less of a concern in a territory as small as Scotland, but it could have serious ramifications for a country the size of Canada.

A PROPOSAL FOR ELECTORAL REFORM IN CANADA:

"If you think it matters. If you think that a lot of our present political malaise and democratic malaise, as many people would describe it, has to do with our electoral system and all of the perverse incentives to which it gives rise: that sort of winner-take-all mentality and that kind of vicious infighting etc. And if you take that seriously and you see that opportunity, it seems to me that you're obliged to try and figure out the ways to make it work."

- Andrew Coyne, CBC News 'At Issue' panel, 24 January 2013.

In its 2004 report, *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*, the Law Commission of Canada developed a list of ten criteria to assess alternative electoral systems. According to the report, they were chosen based on a review of commonly used criteria in government and academic publications, as well as input received through its public consultation process.[200] The criteria were: representation of parties, demographic representation, diversity of ideas,

geographic representation, effective government, accountable government, effective opposition, valuing votes, regional balance and inclusive decision making.[201]

The proposal put forward here was based on a similar, but different set of guiding principles. First, in recognition of the strengths of Canada's existing system, a replacement should maintain strong local representation, be easy for voters to understand and produce stable and effective governments. It should also discourage political infighting, exclude extremist parties from representation and provide coherent opposition to the party (or parties) in power. Second, in response to the detrimental effects of single-member plurality, an alternative voting system should promote national unity and make every vote count. It should also promote diversity – both politically and demographically – inside the House of Commons. And finally, an alternative voting system should be mindful of the political and constitutional constraints which act as barriers to reform.

Ten criteria for assessing alternative electoral systems:

- *Maintains strong local representation*
- *Easy for voters to understand*
- *Produces stable and effective governments*
- *Discourages political infighting*
- *Excludes extremist parties*
- *Provides a coherent opposition*
- *Promotes national unity*
- *Makes every vote count*
- *Promotes political and demographic diversity in the legislature*
- *Mindful of political and constitutional constraints*

The voting systems outlined in this paper so far have met some, but not all of these criteria. Canada's current system meets the first six criteria and has been credited for ensuring

strong local representation and producing governments capable of advancing their legislative agendas. But as discussed in previous sections, it also exacerbates regionalism, contributes to Canada's democratic malaise and results in an inordinate number of 'wasted' votes. British Columbia's single-transferable vote (or BC-STV) gives voters more choice and would produce proportional legislatures. But the system is also complex and susceptible to political infighting. Ontario's mixed-member proportional system succeeds in making every vote count and would produce a politically diverse legislature. But enlarging the size of constituencies to accommodate list MPs would inevitably have an effect on local representation. New Zealand's mixed-member proportional system gives voters greater choice and has shown to produce politically and demographically diverse legislatures. However it is incompatible with Canada's constitutional constraints, given the possibility of overhang seats. Lastly, the Scottish system has similar qualities to the previous two models and has the added benefit of eliminating the possibility of overhang seats. But like all proportional systems, the Scottish model significantly reduces the likelihood of one-party governments. This could have repercussions for the stability and effectiveness of government.

In an attempt to meet all ten criteria, the proposal put forward here calls for the adoption a parallel electoral system with 80% of seats awarded via single-member plurality and 20% of seats awarded on the basis of the party vote in each province. The latter seats would be filled with candidates nominated via closed party lists. These lists would be released to the public in the weeks prior to the election. Voters would be given two votes: one for the local representative of their choice and one for their preferred party. Unlike New Zealand or Scotland, party list seats would not be allocated on a 'top-up' basis to the party that is most underrepresented. Instead, they would be allocated in direct proportion to the party vote in each province, regardless of how

many constituency seats each party has won. The proposed method for allocating these seats is the Sainte-Laguë method, as it is commonly used and it has slight bias towards smaller parties. As a result, the total number of party votes cast for each party, in each province, would be divided by consecutive odd numbers. The highest quotients would determine how list seats are assigned. A threshold of 5% of the provincial party vote would have to be met for a party to be awarded any list seats. The size of the House of Commons would not increase, with the exception of one party list seat that would be assigned to each of Canada's three territories. After the next redistribution takes effect, this would bring the size of the House of Commons to 341 members.

The benefits of implementing such a system would be numerous. First, the size of Canadian ridings would not have to increase dramatically in order to accommodate 70 party list seats. As a result, Canadians would gain an element of proportionality, without sacrificing the benefits of local representation. Second, the system would promote political diversity by allowing parties that struggle to win constituency seats the opportunity to win list seats instead. This would make the House of Commons more reflective of Canadian public opinion. Third, the phenomenon of 'wasted' ballots would be eliminated by giving voters two votes. Even if a citizen voted for a losing candidate in their home riding, their second vote would still have an impact on the provincial party vote. This could encourage more Canadians to cast a ballot on Election Day. Fourth, with a party list, parties may be inclined to nominate a more diverse field of candidates, including women, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. And fifth, a threshold of 5% would be high enough to discourage party fragmentation and prevent extremist parties gaining representation.

An added benefit of this proposal is that it provides incentives for established political parties to support the initiative. Namely, by allocating party-list seats in direct proportion to the provincial party vote, major parties are likely to win seats in areas of the country where they previously had little or no representation. This is good for political parties – in that it offers the prospect of seats in provinces where they are underrepresented – but it is also good for the electoral system as a whole, in that it combats a 'winner-take-all' mentality and reduces the likelihood of a region being excluded from the governing caucus.

A final benefit of this proposal is that it is consistent with Canadian constitutional constraints. Allocating party list seats on a provincial basis would ensure that each province had the same share of seats in the House of Commons as it would have otherwise. As a result, section 42(1)(a), section 51(1) and section 51(a) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* would not be barriers to reform. The same could not be said if party list seats were awarded on a national or regional level.[202] The extra seat assigned to each of the territories is the only exception to this rule but, given that each territory has only one seat under our current system, they would be necessary if the territories were to participate in the selection of party list candidates.

Despite these advantages, critics may argue that this type of system does little to address the overall disproportionality between the percentage of seats a party wins and the number of the votes it receives. For example, Dennis Pilon has argued that such a small number of party list seats "…would do little to alter the typically distorted results of the plurality election."[203] And on this point, Pilon is correct. But proportionality cannot be seen as an end in and of itself. As previously argued, implementing full proportionality would have serious ramifications for the stability and effectiveness of government. It is also unlikely that the Canadian political establishment would ever support such an initiative.

A second critique may be that it is not worth the upheaval for such a minor reform. However while the reform is deliberately modest, if it were implemented, its impact could be great. A more diverse and representative House of Commons, combined with a voting system where every vote counts, would respond to Canada's perceived 'democratic malaise' and could renew public confidence in Canada's political institutions.

Lastly, critics may argue that a parallel electoral system is simply too complicated. While it is true that the intricacies of the Sainte-Laguë method are quite complex, the basic premise of awarding 80% of seats via first-past-the-post and 20% of seats proportionally is relatively straightforward. A transition to a new voting system could also be facilitated with a strong public awareness campaign, similar to the one employed in New Zealand.

To demonstrate how a parallel electoral system like the one proposed might operate in practice, the following simulations were conducted using 2011 federal election results. Table 1 shows the results of the election by province and by party, to be used for comparison.

Table 1: 2011 Canadian Federal Election Results

	Conservative	NDP	Liberal	Bloc Quebecois	Green	Totals
Ontario	73	22	11			**106**
Quebec	5	59	7	4		**75**
British Columbia	21	12	2		1	**36**
Alberta	27	1				**28**
Manitoba	11	2	1			**14**
Saskatchewan	13		1			**14**
Nova Scotia	4	3	4			**11**
New Brunswick	8	1	1			**10**
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	2	4			**7**
Prince Edward Island	1		3			**4**
Northwest Territories		1				**1**
Yukon Territory	1					**1**
Nunavut	1					**1**
Total Seats by Party	**166**	**103**	**34**	**4**	**1**	**308**
Percentage of total seats	*53.9%*	*33.4%*	*11.0%*	*1.3%*	*0.3%*	

Table 2 shows the parallel system as proposed, with 80% of seats awarded via first-past-the-post and 20% of seats awarded via provincial party lists using the Sainte-Laguë method. In terms of methodology, the simulation began by taking the total number of seats that will be assigned to each province after the next redistribution takes effect. Out of those seats, 80% were made constituency seats and 20% were made list seats. For example, New Brunswick has a total of ten seats in the House of Commons. So out of those ten seats, eight (or 80%) were made constituency seats and two (or 20%) were made list seats.

Next, the simulation awarded constituency seats on the basis of the percentage of seats each party won in the province in the last election. For example, the NDP won 22 out of the 106 seats in Ontario in the 2011 federal election (or 20.8%). As a result, it was assigned 20 out of the 97 Ontario constituency seats in the simulation (or 20.6%). Similarly, the Conservative Party won 21 out of the 36 seats in British Columbia in the 2011 federal election (or 58.3%). As a result, it was assigned 20 out of the 34 constituency seats in the simulation (or 58.8%). This assumption is obviously imperfect, given that electoral boundaries would have to be redrawn if a new system was implemented, but this type of assumption was necessary to show how a parallel electoral system might operate using similar results.

The final step of the simulation was to allocate the list seats. To do so, it had to be assumed that that the provincial party vote would be the same as the provincial popular vote in 2011. For example, it was assumed that because Liberal Party won 25.3% of the popular vote in Ontario in 2011, the party's share of Ontario's party vote in the simulation would also be 25.3%. In reality, it almost certain that voter behavior would change if a parallel system was introduced. For example, a voter could split their ballot by voting for a local candidate representing one party, while using their party vote to select a different party. They would also be less likely to

use their party vote to vote strategically. As a result, these simulations can in no way be interpreted as what the results 'would have been'.

Using the Sainte-Laguë method, the total number of votes cast for each party, in each province, was then divided by successive odd numbers to determine how the list seats would be assigned. If there were five list seats to assign, the five highest quotients determined which parties would be awarded the list seats and in what order. A full breakdown of these calculations can be found in Appendix A.

It is also worth noting that the 5% threshold was not incorporated into the simulation, in order to show what the unaltered results would look like. Had it been used, the Green Party would have been denied a list seat in Ontario, as they won just 3.8% of the popular vote. The seat would have been awarded to the party with the next highest quotient instead, which in this case was Conservative Party.

Table 3 shows a very similar simulation, but with the list seats calculated and awarded using the D'Hondt method, providing a slight bias to the larger parties.

Table 2: Simulated 2011 federal election results calculated using a parallel system, assigning constituency seats (CS, 80% of total) and list seats (LS, 20% of total) (Sainte-Laguë method)

	Conservative		**NDP**		**Liberal**		**Bloc Québécois**		**Green**		**Totals**	
	CS	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**
Ontario	67	11	20	6	10	6				1	**97**	**24**
Quebec	4	3	49	7	6	2	3	4	0		**62**	**16**
British Columbia	20	4	11	2	2	1			1	1	**34**	**8**
Alberta	26	5	1	1		1					**27**	**7**
Manitoba	9	2	1	1	1						**11**	**3**
Saskatchewan	10	2		1	1						**11**	**3**
Nova Scotia	3	1	3	1	3						**9**	**2**
New Brunswick	6	1	1	1	1						**8**	**2**
Newfoundland and Labrador	1		2		3	1					**6**	**1**
Prince Edward Island	1	1			2						**3**	**1**
Northwest Territories			1	1							**1**	**1**
Yukon Territory	1	1									**1**	**1**
Nunavut	1	1									**1**	**1**
Seat totals by type and party	**149**	**32**	**89**	**21**	**29**	**11**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**271**	**70**
Total Seats by Party	**181**		**110**		**40**		**7**		**3**		**341**	
Percentage of total seats	*53.0%*		*32.2%*		*11.7%*		*2.0%*		*0.9%*			

***Note**: Format of this table inspired by: Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada, p. 89.*

Table 3: Simulated 2011 federal election results calculated using a parallel system, assigning constituency seats (CS, 80% of total) and list seats (LS, 20% of total) (D'Hondt method)

	Conservative		NDP		Liberal		Bloc Québécois		Green		Totals	
	CS	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**
Ontario	67	11	20	6	10	6				1	**97**	**24**
Quebec	4	3	49	7	6	2	3	4	0		**62**	**16**
British Columbia	20	4	11	3	2	1			1		**34**	**8**
Alberta	26	6	1	1							**27**	**7**
Manitoba	9	2	1	1	1						**11**	**3**
Saskatchewan	10	2		1	1						**11**	**3**
Nova Scotia	3	1	3	1	3						**9**	**2**
New Brunswick	6	1	1	1	1						**8**	**2**
Newfoundland and Labrador	1		2		3	1					**6**	**1**
Prince Edward Island	1	1			2						**3**	**1**
Northwest Territories			1	1							**1**	**1**
Yukon Territory	1	1									**1**	**1**
Nunavut	1	1									**1**	**1**
Seat totals by type and party	**149**	**33**	**89**	**22**	**29**	**10**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**271**	**70**
Total Seats by Party	**182**		**111**		**39**		**7**		**2**		**341**	
Percentage of total seats	*53.4%*		*32.6%*		*11.4%*		*2.0%*		*0.6%*			

***Note**: Format of this table inspired by: Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada, p. 89.*

There are several interesting conclusions that can be drawn from these two simulations. First, it is interesting to note that in the parallel system shown in Table 2 (Sainte-Laguë method), the Green Party's share of seats tripled from 0.3% to 0.9%. For a small party with a history of underrepresentation in the House of Commons, these extra members could have a profound effect on the party's ability to represent the interests of its supporters. It also demonstrates that a parallel system could promote political diversity in the House of Commons.

Second, it is noteworthy that despite their poor showing in the 2011 federal election, the Liberal Party still managed to win a list seat in Alberta, as did the NDP. This is significant for two primary reasons. First, it provides a tangible reason why these parties would want to support electoral reform in Canada. And second, it may play a modest role in promoting national unity, by working to dispel the notion that Alberta voters only vote Conservative.

Third, it should be highlighted that the Conservative Party also benefited from the simulation. Not only was it able to retain its majority government, but it also picked up seats in areas of the country where it was previously underrepresented. An example of this can be seen in the province of Quebec, where the party was able to win three list seats. This demonstrates that both the governing party and the opposition parties have clear incentives to support this type of reform.

And fourth, the simulation demonstrates that provinces both large and small can benefit from the inclusion of list seats. An interesting example of this can be seen by looking at the case of Prince Edward Island. In the 2011 federal election, the Conservative Party narrowly won the provincial popular vote, beating the Liberal Party by a margin of 41.2% to 41.0%. But despite the victory, the Liberal Party managed to secure three out of Prince Edward Island's four seats. In the simulation – once again assuming that the party vote is the same as the popular vote – this

distortion is corrected and the province's one list seat is awarded to the Conservative Party to compensate for its underrepresentation. By giving voters two votes, even the territories – with their one constituency seat and one list seat apiece – could theoretically elect candidates representing two different parties, providing that outcomes of the territorial constituency vote and party vote were different.

In contrast to these two simulations, Table 4 and Table 5 demonstrate what the results would have looked like had the list seats been awarded on a 'top-up' basis to the party that was most underrepresented, instead of in direct proportion to each party's share of the popular vote. The methodology for these simulations was identical to the previous two, with the exception that the number of constituency seats already won was taken into account when calculating how the list seats would be awarded, using either the Sainte-Laguë or the D'Hondt method. Once again, the full calculations can be found in Appendix A. What is noteworthy here is that even with 20% of seats allocated on a 'top-up' basis – which is considerably lower than most MMP systems – the Conservatives slip into a minority government. As a result, the party would have a clear disincentive to support this type of reform.

Table 4: Simulated 2011 federal election results calculated using a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, assigning constituency seats (80% of total) and list seats (20% of total) (Sainte-Laguë method)

	Conservative		NDP		Liberal		Bloc Québécois		Green		Totals	
	CS	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**
Ontario	67		20	5	10	15				4	**97**	**24**
Quebec	4	5	49		6	1	3	9	0	1	**62**	**16**
British Columbia	20		11	2	2	4			1	2	**34**	**8**
Alberta	26		1	4		2				1	**27**	**7**
Manitoba	9		1	2	1	1					**11**	**3**
Saskatchewan	10			3	1						**11**	**3**
Nova Scotia	3	1	3	1	3						**9**	**2**
New Brunswick	6		1	1	1	1					**8**	**2**
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	1	2		3						**6**	**1**
Prince Edward Island	1			1	2						**3**	**1**
Northwest Territories		1	1								**1**	**1**
Yukon Territory	1					1					**1**	**1**
Nunavut	1					1					**1**	**1**
Seat totals by type and party	**149**	**8**	**89**	**19**	**29**	**26**	**3**	**9**	**1**	**8**	**271**	**70**
Total Seats by Party	**157**		**108**		**55**		**12**		**9**		**341**	
Percentage of total seats	*46.0%*		*31.7%*		*16.1%*		*3.5%*		*2.6%*			

***Note**: Format of this table inspired by: Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada, p. 89.*

Table 5: Simulated 2011 federal election results calculated using a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, assigning constituency seats (80% of total) and list seats (20% of total) (D'Hondt method)

	Conservative		**NDP**		**Liberal**		**Bloc Québécois**		**Green**		**Totals**	
	CS	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**	**CS**	**LS**
Ontario	67		20	6	10	15				3	**97**	**24**
Quebec	4	5	49		6	1	3	9	0	1	**62**	**16**
British Columbia	20		11	3	2	3			1	2	**34**	**8**
Alberta	26		1	4		2				1	**27**	**7**
Manitoba	9		1	2	1	1					**11**	**3**
Saskatchewan	10			3	1						**11**	**3**
Nova Scotia	3	1	3	1	3						**9**	**2**
New Brunswick	6		1	1	1	1					**8**	**2**
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	1	2		3						**6**	**1**
Prince Edward Island	1	1			2						**3**	**1**
Northwest Territories		1	1								**1**	**1**
Yukon Territory	1					1					**1**	**1**
Nunavut	1					1					**1**	**1**
Seat totals by type and party	**149**	**9**	**89**	**20**	**29**	**25**	**3**	**9**	**1**	**7**	**271**	**70**
Total Seats by Party	**158**		**109**		**54**		**12**		**8**		**341**	
Percentage of total seats	*46.3%*		*32.0%*		*15.8%*		*3.5%*		*2.3%*			

***Note**: Format of this table inspired by: Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada, p. 8.*

CONCLUSION:

Canada's single-member plurality system has many advantages. It promotes local representation, produces stable and effective governments and it is easy for voters to understand. But as explored in this essay, Canada's first-past-the-post system also contributes to outcomes that are detrimental to Canadian democracy. Among them, Canada's voting system has exacerbated regional divisions, left some areas of the country underrepresented in the governing caucus and has contributed to the underrepresentation of women, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples in the House of Commons. It has also resulted in phenomena such as: 'wasted' ballots, 'false' majorities, vote splitting and strategic voting. And perhaps most importantly, it is believed to contribute to a 'democratic malaise' in Canada, characterized by apathy, cynicism and a distrust of political institutions.

After reviewing Canada's electoral system, its history with voting system reform and case studies from British Columbia, Ontario, New Zealand and Scotland, a parallel electoral system was proposed for Canada. This system would see 80% of seats awarded via single-member plurality, with the remaining 20% awarded on the basis of the party vote in each province. Commentators like Dennis Pilon have suggested that these systems are "false alternatives," which fail to address the problems of plurality or match the promise of fully proportional systems. However this essay has challenged this assertion and has argued that, in addition to being more feasible, implementing a parallel electoral system in Canada would make every vote count, would respond to Canada's democratic malaise and would preserve local representation, while simultaneously adding an element of proportionality. It would also be consistent with both political and constitutional constraints. Moreover, it would provide political incumbents with an incentive to support reform, by offering the possibility of representation in

areas of the country where their parties are underrepresented, without undermining their ability to win a majority government in the future.

The positive effects of implementing a parallel voting system can also be seen in the simulations conducted at the end of this paper using 2011 federal election results. They showed that in a parallel electoral system with 80% constituency seats and 20% list seats allocated using the Sainte-Laguë method, the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Conservative party would all gain seats in provinces where they were previously underrepresented. This provides an incentive for political incumbents to support reform and it also strengthens Canada's electoral system as a whole. The simulation also demonstrated that smaller parties would benefit from a parallel electoral system. In the case of the Green Party, the simulation found that it would significantly increase its share of seats in the House of Commons under a parallel system. This would promote political diversity and it could have a profound impact on the party's ability to represent its supporters. It would be wrong to suggest that a parallel electoral system can address every shortcoming associated with Canada's electoral system. But given its ability to facilitate these sorts of positive outcomes, it would also be wrong to dismiss it as a 'false alternative'.

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APPENDIX A – CALCULATIONS FOR SIMULATIONS

Red: List seat won
***Blue*:** Constituency seat

Ontario:

D'Hondt - Ontario (Parallel):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	**2,457,463**	**1,228,731**	**819,154**	**614,365**	**491,492**	**409,577**	**351,066**	**307,182**
NDP	**1,417,435**	**708,717**	**472,478**	**354,358**	**283,487**	**236,239**	202,490	177,179
Liberal	**1,400,302**	**700,151**	**466,767**	**350,075**	**280,060**	**233,383**	200,043	175,037
Green	**207,435**	103,717	69,145	51,858	41,487	34,572	29,633	25,929

9	10	11	12
273,051	**245,746**	**223,405**	204,788
157,492	141,743	128,857	118,119
155,589	140,030	127,300	116,691
23,048	20,743	18,857	17,286

Sainte-Lague - Ontario (Parallel)								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	**2,457,463**	**819,154**	**491,492**	**351,066**	**273,051**	**223,405**	**189,035**	**163,830**
NDP	**1,417,435**	**472,478**	**283,487**	**202,490**	**157,492**	**128,857**	109,033	94,495
Liberal	**1,400,302**	**466,767**	**280,060**	**200,043**	**155,589**	**127,300**	107,715	93,353
Green	**207,435**	69,145	41,487	29,633	23,048	18,857	15,956	13,829

17	19	21	23
144,556	**129,340**	**117,022**	106,846
83,378	74,601	67,496	61,627
82,370	73,700	66,681	60,882
12,202	10,917	9,877	9,018

D'Hondt - Ontario (MMP):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	***2,457,463***	***1,228,731***	***819,154***	***614,365***	***491,492***	***409,577***	***351,066***	***307,182***
NDP	***1,417,435***	***708,717***	***472,478***	***354,358***	***283,487***	***236,239***	***202,490***	***177,179***
Liberal	***1,400,302***	***700,151***	***466,767***	***350,075***	***280,060***	***233,383***	***200,043***	***175,037***

Green	**207,435**	**103,717**	**69,145**	51,858	41,487	34,572	29,633	25,929

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
273,051	***245,746***	***223,405***	***204,788***	***189,035***	***175,533***	***163,830***	***153,591***	***144,556***
157,492	***141,743***	***128,857***	***118,119***	***109,033***	***101,245***	***94,495***	***88,589***	***83,378***
155,589	***140,030***	**127,300**	**116,691**	**107,715**	**100,021**	**93,353**	**87,518**	**82,370**
23,048	20,743	18,857	17,286	15,956	14,816	13,829	12,964	12,202

18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
136,525	***129,340***	***122,873***	***117,022***	***111,702***	***106,846***	***102,394***	***98,298***	***94,517***
78,746	***74,601***	***70,871***	**67,496**	**64,428**	**61,627**	**59,059**	**56,697**	**54,516**
77,794	**73,700**	**70,015**	**66,681**	**63,650**	**60,882**	**58,345**	**56,012**	53,857
11,524	10,917	10,371	9,877	9,428	9,018	8,643	8,297	7,978

27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
91,017	***87,766***	***84,740***	***81,915***	***79,273***	***76,795***	***74,468***	***72,278***	***70,213***	***68,262***
52,497	50,622	48,877	47,247	45,723	44,294	42,952	41,689	40,498	39,373
51,863	50,010	48,286	46,676	45,171	43,759	42,433	41,185	40,008	38,897
7,682	7,408	7,152	6,914	6,691	6,482	6,285	6,101	5,926	5,762

37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
66,417	***64,670***	***63,011***	***61,436***	***59,938***	***58,511***	***57,150***	***55,851***	***54,610***	***53,423***	***52,286***	***51,197***
38,309	37,300	36,344	35,435	34,571	33,748	32,963	32,214	31,498	30,813	30,158	29,529
37,846	36,850	35,905	35,007	34,153	33,340	32,565	31,825	31,117	30,441	29,793	29,172
5,606	5,458	5,318	5,185	5,059	4,938	4,824	4,714	4,609	4,509	4,413	4,321

49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
50,152	***49,149***	***48,185***	***47,258***	***46,367***	***45,508***	***44,681***	***43,883***	***43,113***	***42,370***	***41,651***	***40,957***
28,927	28,348	27,792	27,258	26,744	26,248	25,771	25,311	24,867	24,438	24,024	23,623
28,577	28,006	27,456	26,928	26,420	25,931	25,460	25,005	24,566	24,143	23,733	23,338
4,233	4,148	4,067	3,989	3,913	3,841	3,771	3,704	3,639	3,576	3,515	3,457

61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68
40,286	***39,636***	***39,007***	***38,397***	***37,807***	***37,234***	***36,678***	36,139
23,236	22,861	22,498	22,147	21,806	21,476	21,155	20,844
22,955	22,585	22,227	21,879	21,543	21,216	20,900	20,592
3,400	3,345	3,292	3,241	3,191	3,142	3,096	3,050

Sainte-Lague - Ontario (MMP)						

	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	***2,457,463***	***819,154***	***491,492***	***351,066***	***273,051***	***223,405***	***189,035***	***163,830***
NDP	***1,417,435***	***472,478***	***283,487***	***202,490***	***157,492***	***128,857***	***109,033***	***94,495***
Liberal	***1,400,302***	***466,767***	***280,060***	***200,043***	***155,589***	***127,300***	***107,715***	***93,353***
Green	**207,435**	**69,145**	**41,487**	**29,633**	23,048	18,857	15,956	13,829

17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35
144,556	***129,340***	***117,022***	***106,846***	***98,298***	***91,017***	***84,740***	***79,273***	***74,468***	***70,213***
83,378	***74,601***	***67,496***	***61,627***	***56,697***	***52,497***	***48,877***	***45,723***	***42,952***	***40,498***
82,370	***73,700***	**66,681**	**60,882**	**56,012**	**51,863**	**48,286**	**45,171**	**42,433**	**40,008**
12,202	10,917	9,877	9,018	8,297	7,682	7,152	6,691	6,285	5,926

37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55
66,417	***63,011***	***59,938***	***57,150***	***54,610***	***52,286***	***50,152***	***48,185***	***46,367***	***44,681***
38,309	***36,344***	**34,571**	**32,963**	**31,498**	**30,158**	**28,927**	27,792	26,744	25,771
37,846	**35,905**	**34,153**	**32,565**	**31,117**	**29,793**	**28,577**	27,456	26,420	25,460
5,606	5,318	5,059	4,824	4,609	4,413	4,233	4,067	3,913	3,771

57	59	61	63	65	67	69	71	73	75
43,113	***41,651***	***40,286***	***39,007***	***37,807***	***36,678***	***35,615***	***34,612***	***33,663***	***32,766***
24,867	24,024	23,236	22,498	21,806	21,155	20,542	19,963	19,416	18,899
24,566	23,733	22,955	22,227	21,543	20,900	20,294	19,722	19,182	18,670
3,639	3,515	3,400	3,292	3,191	3,096	3,006	2,921	2,841	2,765

77	79	81	83	85	87	89	91	93	95
31,915	***31,107***	***30,339***	***29,607***	***28,911***	***28,246***	***27,611***	***27,005***	***26,424***	***25,868***
18,408	17,942	17,499	17,077	16,675	16,292	15,926	15,576	15,241	14,920
18,185	17,725	17,287	16,871	16,474	16,095	15,733	15,387	15,057	14,740
2,693	2,625	2,560	2,499	2,440	2,384	2,330	2,279	2,230	2,183

97	99	101	103	105	107	109	111	113	115	117	119
25,334	***24,822***	***24,331***	***23,858***	***23,404***	***22,966***	***22,545***	***22,139***	***21,747***	***21,369***	***21,003***	***20,650***
14,612	14,317	14,034	13,761	13,499	13,247	13,003	12,769	12,543	12,325	12,114	11,911
14,436	14,144	13,864	13,595	13,336	13,086	12,846	12,615	12,392	12,176	11,968	11,767
2,138	2,095	2,053	2,013	1,975	1,938	1,903	1,868	1,835	1,803	1,772	1,743

121	123	125	127	129	131	133	135
20,309	***19,979***	***19,659***	***19,350***	***19,050***	***18,759***	***18,477***	18,203
11,714	11,523	11,339	11,160	10,987	10,820	10,657	10,499

11,572	11,384	11,202	11,026	10,855	10,689	10,528	10,372
1,714	1,686	1,659	1,633	1,608	1,583	1,559	1,536

Quebec:

D'Hondt - Quebec (Parallel):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	**627,961**	**313,980**	**209,320**	156,990	125,592	104,660	89,708	78,495
NDP	**1,630,865**	**815,432**	**543,621**	**407,716**	**326,173**	**271,810**	**232,980**	203,858
Liberal	**538,447**	**269,223**	179,482	134,611	107,689	89,741	76,921	67,305
Green	80,402	40,201	26,800	20,100	16,080	13,400	11,486	10,050
Bloc	**891,425**	**445,712**	**297,141**	**222,856**	178,285	148,570	127,346	111,428

Sainte-Lague - Quebec (Parallel):								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	**627,961**	**209,320**	**125,592**	89,708	69,773	57,087	48,304	41,864
NDP	**1,630,865**	**543,621**	**326,173**	**232,980**	**181,207**	**148,260**	**125,451**	108,724
Liberal	**538,447**	**179,482**	107,689	76,921	59,827	48,949	41,419	35,896
Green	80,402	26,800	16,080	11,486	8,933	7,309	6,184	5,360
Bloc	**891,425**	**297,141**	**178,285**	**127,346**	99,047	81,038	68,571	59,428

D'Hondt - Quebec (MMP):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	***627,961***	***313,980***	***209,320***	***156,990***	**125,592**	**104,660**	**89,708**	**78,495**
NDP	***1,630,865***	***815,432***	***543,621***	***407,716***	***326,173***	***271,810***	***232,980***	***203,858***
Liberal	***538,447***	***269,223***	***179,482***	***134,611***	***107,689***	***89,741***	**76,921**	67,305
Green	**80,402**	40,201	26,800	20,100	16,080	13,400	11,486	10,050
Bloc	***891,425***	***445,712***	***297,141***	**222,856**	**178,285**	**148,570**	**127,346**	**111,428**

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
69,773	62,796	57,087	52,330	48,304	44,854	41,864	39,247	36,938	34,886	33,050
181,207	***163,086***	***148,260***	***135,905***	***125,451***	***116,490***	***108,724***	***101,929***	***95,933***	***90,603***	***85,835***
59,827	53,844	48,949	44,870	41,419	38,460	35,896	33,652	31,673	29,913	28,339
8,933	8,040	7,309	6,700	6,184	5,743	5,360	5,025	4,729	4,466	4,231
99,047	**89,142**	**81,038**	**74,285**	68,571	63,673	59,428	55,714	52,436	49,523	46,917

20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
31,398	29,902	28,543	27,302	26,165	25,118	24,152	23,257	22,427	21,653	20,932	20,256
81,543	***77,660***	***74,130***	***70,907***	***67,952***	***65,234***	***62,725***	***60,402***	***58,245***	***56,236***	***54,362***	***52,608***

26,922	25,640	24,474	23,410	22,435	21,537	20,709	19,942	19,230	18,567	17,948	17,369
4,020	3,828	3,654	3,495	3,350	3,216	3,092	2,977	2,871	2,772	2,680	2,593
44,571	42,448	40,519	38,757	37,142	35,657	34,285	33,015	31,836	30,738	29,714	28,755

32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
19,623	19,029	18,469	17,941	17,443	16,971	16,525	16,101	15,699	15,316	14,951
50,964	***49,420***	***47,966***	***46,596***	***45,301***	***44,077***	***42,917***	***41,817***	***40,771***	***39,777***	***38,830***
16,826	16,316	15,836	15,384	14,956	14,552	14,169	13,806	13,461	13,132	12,820
2,512	2,436	2,364	2,297	2,233	2,173	2,115	2,061	2,010	1,961	1,914
27,857	27,012	26,218	25,469	24,761	24,092	23,458	22,857	22,285	21,742	21,224

43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
14,603	14,271	13,954	13,651	13,360	13,082	12,815	12,559
37,927	***37,065***	***36,241***	***35,453***	***34,699***	***33,976***	***33,282***	32,617
12,522	12,237	11,965	11,705	11,456	11,217	10,988	10,768
1,869	1,827	1,786	1,747	1,710	1,675	1,640	1,608
20,730	20,259	19,809	19,378	18,966	18,571	18,192	17,828

Sainte-Lague - Quebec (MMP):								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	***627,961***	***209,320***	***125,592***	***89,708***	**69,773**	**57,087**	**48,304**	**41,864**
NDP	***1,630,865***	***543,621***	***326,173***	***232,980***	***181,207***	***148,260***	***125,451***	***108,724***
Liberal	***538,447***	***179,482***	***107,689***	***76,921***	***59,827***	***48,949***	**41,419**	35,896
Green	**80,402**	26,800	16,080	11,486	8,933	7,309	6,184	5,360
Bloc	***891,425***	***297,141***	***178,285***	**127,346**	**99,047**	**81,038**	**68,571**	**59,428**

17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35
36,938	33,050	29,902	27,302	25,118	23,257	21,653	20,256	19,029	17,941
95,933	***85,835***	***77,660***	***70,907***	***65,234***	***60,402***	***56,236***	***52,608***	***49,420***	***46,596***
31,673	28,339	25,640	23,410	21,537	19,942	18,567	17,369	16,316	15,384
4,729	4,231	3,828	3,495	3,216	2,977	2,772	2,593	2,436	2,297
52,436	**46,917**	**42,448**	**38,757**	35,657	33,015	30,738	28,755	27,012	25,469

37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57
16,971	16,101	15,316	14,603	13,954	13,360	12,815	12,312	11,848	11,417	11,016
44,077	***41,817***	***39,777***	***37,927***	***36,241***	***34,699***	***33,282***	***31,977***	***30,771***	***29,652***	***28,611***
14,552	13,806	13,132	12,522	11,965	11,456	10,988	10,557	10,159	9,789	9,446
2,173	2,061	1,961	1,869	1,786	1,710	1,640	1,576	1,517	1,461	1,410

24,092	22,857	21,742	20,730	19,809	18,966	18,192	17,478	16,819	16,207	15,639

59	61	63	65	67	69	71	73	75	77	79	81
10,643	10,294	9,967	9,660	9,372	9,100	8,844	8,602	8,372	8,155	7,948	7,752
27,641	***26,735***	***25,886***	***25,090***	***24,341***	***23,635***	***22,969***	***22,340***	***21,744***	***21,180***	***20,643***	***20,134***
9,126	8,827	8,546	8,283	8,036	7,803	7,583	7,375	7,179	6,992	6,815	6,647
1,362	1,318	1,276	1,236	1,200	1,165	1,132	1,101	1,072	1,044	1,017	992
15,108	14,613	14,149	13,714	13,304	12,919	12,555	12,211	11,885	11,576	11,283	11,005

83	85	87	89	91	93	95	97	99
7,565	7,387	7,217	7,055	6,900	6,752	6,610	6,473	6,343
19,648	***19,186***	***18,745***	***18,324***	***17,921***	***17,536***	***17,167***	***16,813***	16,473
6,487	6,334	6,189	6,049	5,917	5,789	5,667	5,551	5,438
968	945	924	903	883	864	846	828	812
10,740	10,487	10,246	10,016	9,795	9,585	9,383	9,189	9,004

British Columbia:

D'Hondt - British Columbia (Parallel):					
	1	2	3	4	5
Conservative	**853,272**	**426,636**	**284,424**	**213,318**	170,654
NDP	**609,102**	**304,551**	**203,034**	152,275	121,820
Liberal	**251,263**	125,631	83,754	62,815	50,252
Green	143,769	71,884	47,923	35,942	28,753

Sainte-Lague - British Columbia (Parallel)					
	1	3	5	7	9
Conservative	**853,272**	**284,424**	**170,654**	**121,896**	94,808
NDP	**609,102**	**203,034**	121,820	87,014	67,678
Liberal	**251,263**	83,754	50,252	35,894	27,918
Green	**143,769**	47,923	28,753	20,538	15,974

D'Hondt - British Columbia (MMP):									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Conservative	***853,272***	***426,636***	***284,424***	***213,318***	***170,654***	***142,212***	***121,896***	***106,659***	***94,808***
NDP	***609,102***	***304,551***	***203,034***	***152,275***	***121,820***	***101,517***	***87,014***	***76,137***	***67,678***
Liberal	***251,263***	***125,631***	**83,754**	**62,815**	**50,252**	41,877	35,894	31,407	27,918
Green	***143,769***	**71,884**	**47,923**	35,942	28,753	23,961	20,538	17,971	15,974

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
85,327	***77,570***	***71,106***	***65,636***	***60,948***	***56,884***	***53,329***	***50,192***	***47,404***	***44,909***	***42,663***	40,632
60,910	***55,372***	**50,758**	**46,854**	**43,507**	40,606	38,068	35,829	33,839	32,058	30,455	29,004
25,126	22,842	20,938	19,327	17,947	16,750	15,703	14,780	13,959	13,224	12,563	11,964
14,376	13,069	11,980	11,059	10,269	9,584	8,985	8,457	7,987	7,566	7,188	6,846

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
65,636	***60,948***	***56,884***	***53,329***	***50,192***	***47,404***	***44,909***	***42,663***	40,632
46,854	**43,507**	40,606	38,068	35,829	33,839	32,058	30,455	29,004
19,327	17,947	16,750	15,703	14,780	13,959	13,224	12,563	11,964
11,059	10,269	9,584	8,985	8,457	7,987	7,566	7,188	6,846

Sainte-Lague - British Columbia (MMP)								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	***853,272***	***284,424***	***170,654***	***121,896***	***94,808***	***77,570***	***65,636***	***56,884***
NDP	***609,102***	***203,034***	***121,820***	***87,014***	***67,678***	***55,372***	***46,854***	***40,606***
Liberal	***251,263***	***83,754***	**50,252**	**35,894**	**27,918**	**22,842**	19,327	16,750
Green	***143,769***	**47,923**	**28,753**	20,538	15,974	13,069	11,059	9,584

17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35
50,192	***44,909***	***40,632***	***37,098***	***34,130***	***31,602***	***29,423***	***27,524***	***25,856***	***24,379***
35,829	***32,058***	***29,004***	**26,482**	**24,364**	22,559	21,003	19,648	18,457	17,402
14,780	13,224	11,964	10,924	10,050	9,306	8,664	8,105	7,614	7,178
8,457	7,566	6,846	6,250	5,750	5,324	4,957	4,637	4,356	4,107

37	39	41
23,061	***21,878***	20,811
16,462	15,618	14,856
6,790	6,442	6,128
3,885	3,686	3,506

Alberta:

D'Hondt - Alberta (Parallel):							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conservative	**932,765**	**466,382**	**310,921**	**233,191**	**186,553**	**155,460**	133,252
NDP	**234,730**	117,365	78,243	58,682	46,946	39,121	33,532

Liberal	129,310	64,655	43,103	32,327	25,862	21,551	18,472
Green	73,058	36,529	24,352	18,264	14,611	12,176	10,436

Sainte-Lague - Alberta (Parallel)						
	1	3	5	7	9	11
Conservative	**932,765**	**310,921**	**186,553**	**133,252**	**103,640**	84,796
NDP	**234,730**	78,243	46,946	33,532	26,081	21,339
Liberal	**129,310**	43,103	25,862	18,472	14,367	11,755
Green	73,058	24,352	14,611	10,436	8,117	6,641

D'Hondt - Alberta (MMP):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	***932,765***	***466,382***	***310,921***	***233,191***	***186,553***	***155,460***	***133,252***	***116,595***
NDP	***234,730***	**117,365**	**78,243**	**58,682**	**46,946**	39,121	33,532	29,341
Liberal	**129,310**	**64,655**	43,103	32,327	25,862	21,551	18,472	16,163
Green	**73,058**	36,529	24,352	18,264	14,611	12,176	10,436	9,132

				13	14	15	16	17	18
9	10	11	12	***71,751***	***66,626***	***62,184***	***58,297***	***54,868***	***51,820***
103,640	***93,276***	***84,796***	***77,730***	18,056	16,766	15,648	14,670	13,807	13,040
26,081	23,473	21,339	19,560	9,946	9,236	8,620	8,081	7,606	7,183
14,367	12,931	11,755	10,775	5,619	5,218	4,870	4,566	4,297	4,058
8,117	7,305	6,641	6,088						

19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
49,092	***46,638***	***44,417***	***42,398***	***40,555***	***38,865***	***37,310***	***35,875***	34,546
12,354	11,736	11,177	10,669	10,205	9,780	9,389	9,028	8,693
6,805	6,465	6,157	5,877	5,622	5,387	5,172	4,973	4,789
3,845	3,652	3,478	3,320	3,176	3,044	2,922	2,809	2,705

Sainte-Lague - Alberta (MMP)								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	***932,765***	***310,921***	***186,553***	***133,252***	***103,640***	***84,796***	***71,751***	***62,184***
NDP	***234,730***	**78,243**	**46,946**	**33,532**	**26,081**	21,339	18,056	15,648
Liberal	**129,310**	**43,103**	25,862	18,472	14,367	11,755	9,946	8,620
Green	**73,058**	24,352	14,611	10,436	8,117	6,641	5,619	4,870

17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37

54,868	***49,092***	***44,417***	***40,555***	***37,310***	***34,546***	***32,164***	***30,089***	***28,265***	***26,650***	***25,209***
13,807	12,354	11,177	10,205	9,389	8,693	8,094	7,571	7,113	6,706	6,344
7,606	6,805	6,157	5,622	5,172	4,789	4,458	4,171	3,918	3,694	3,494
4,297	3,845	3,478	3,176	2,922	2,705	2,519	2,356	2,213	2,087	1,974

39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53
23,917	***22,750***	***21,692***	***20,728***	***19,846***	***19,036***	***18,289***	17,599
6,018	5,725	5,458	5,216	4,994	4,790	4,602	4,428
3,315	3,153	3,007	2,873	2,751	2,638	2,535	2,439
1,873	1,781	1,699	1,623	1,554	1,490	1,432	1,378

Manitoba:

D'Hondt - Manitoba (Parallel):			
	1	2	3
Conservative	**262,941**	**131,470**	87,647
NDP	**126,639**	63,319	42,213
Liberal	81,417	40,708	27,139
Green	17,738	8,869	5,912

Sainte-Lague - Manitoba (Parallel)			
	1	3	5
Conservative	**262,941**	**87,647**	52,588
NDP	**126,639**	42,213	25,327
Liberal	81,417	27,139	16,283
Green	17,738	5,912	3,547

D'Hondt - Manitoba (MMP):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	***262,941***	***131,470***	***87,647***	***65,735***	***52,588***	***43,823***	***37,563***	***32,867***
NDP	***126,639***	**63,319**	**42,213**	31,659	25,327	21,106	18,091	15,829
Liberal	***81,417***	**40,708**	27,139	20,354	16,283	13,569	11,631	10,177
Green	17,738	8,869	5,912	4,434	3,547	2,956	2,534	2,217

9	10
29,215	26,294
14,071	12,663
9,046	8,141

1,970	1,773

Sainte-Lague - Manitoba (MMP)								
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Conservative	***262,941***	***87,647***	***52,588***	***37,563***	***29,215***	***23,903***	***20,226***	***17,529***
NDP	***126,639***	**42,213**	**25,327**	18,091	14,071	11,512	9,741	8,442
Liberal	***81,417***	**27,139**	16,283	11,631	9,046	7,401	6,262	5,427
Green	17,738	5,912	3,547	2,534	1,970	1,612	1,364	1,182

17	19
15,467	13,839
7,449	6,665
4,789	4,285
1,043	933

Saskatchewan:

D'Hondt - Saskatchewan (Parallel):			
	1	2	3
Conservative	**256,167**	**128,083**	85,389
NDP	**147,214**	73,607	49,071
Liberal	38,743	19,371	12,914
Green	12,045	6,022	4,015

Sainte-Lague - Saskatchewan (Parallel)			
	1	3	5
Conservative	**256,167**	**85,389**	51,233
NDP	**147,214**	49,071	29,442
Liberal	38,743	12,914	7,748
Green	12,045	4,015	2,409

D'Hondt - Saskatchewan (MMP):								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conservative	***256,167***	***128,083***	***85,389***	***64,041***	***51,233***	***42,694***	***36,595***	***32,020***
NDP	**147,214**	**73,607**	**49,071**	36,803	29,442	24,535	21,030	18,401
Liberal	***38,743***	19,371	12,914	9,685	7,748	6,457	5,534	4,842
Green	12,045	6,022	4,015	3,011	2,409	2,007	1,720	1,505

9	10	11

28,463	***25,616***	23,287
16,357	14,721	13,383
4,304	3,874	3,522
1,338	1,204	1,095

Sainte-Lague - Saskatchewan (MMP)								
	1	3	5	7	9	17	19	21
Conservative	***256,167***	***85,389***	***51,233***	***36,595***	***28,463***	***15,068***	***13,482***	12,198
NDP	**147,214**	**49,071**	**29,442**	21,030	16,357	8,659	7,748	7,010
Liberal	***38,743***	12,914	7,748	5,534	4,304	2,279	2,039	1,844
Green	12,045	4,015	2,409	1,720	1,338	708	633	573

Nova Scotia:

D'Hondt - Nova Scotia (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	**165,818**	82,909
NDP	**136,620**	68,310
Liberal	130,577	65,288
Green	17,808	8,904

Sainte-Lague - Nova Scotia (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	**165,818**	55,272
NDP	**136,620**	45,540
Liberal	130,577	43,525
Green	17,808	5,936

D'Hondt - Nova Scotia (MMP):					
	1	2	3	4	5
Conservative	***165,818***	***82,909***	***55,272***	**41,454**	33,163
NDP	***136,620***	***68,310***	***45,540***	**34,155**	27,324
Liberal	***130,577***	***65,288***	***43,525***	32,644	26,115
Green	17,808	8,904	5,936	4,452	3,561

Sainte-Lague - Nova Scotia (MMP)					
	1	3	5	7	9
Conservative	***165,818***	***55,272***	***33,163***	**23,688**	18,424
NDP	***136,620***	***45,540***	***27,324***	**19,517**	15,180

Liberal	***130,577***	***43,525***	***26,115***	18,653	14,508
Green	17,808	5,936	3,561	2,544	1,978

New Brunswick:

D'Hondt - New Brunswick (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	**170,420**	85,210
NDP	**115,830**	57,915
Liberal	87,871	43,935
Green	12,317	6,158

Sainte-Lague - New Brunswick (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	**170,420**	56,806
NDP	**115,830**	38,610
Liberal	87,871	29,290
Green	12,317	4,105

D'Hondt - New Brunswick (MMP):							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conservative	***170,420***	***85,210***	***56,806***	***42,605***	***34,084***	***28,403***	24,345
NDP	***115,830***	**57,915**	38,610	28,957	23,166	19,305	16,547
Liberal	***87,871***	**43,935**	29,290	21,967	17,574	14,645	12,553
Green	12,317	6,158	4,105	3,079	2,463	2,052	1,759

Sainte-Lague - New Brunswick (MMP)							
	1	3	5	7	9	11	13
Conservative	***170,420***	***56,806***	***34,084***	***24,345***	***18,935***	***15,492***	13,109
NDP	***115,830***	**38,610**	23,166	16,547	12,870	10,530	8,910
Liberal	***87,871***	**29,290**	17,574	12,553	9,763	7,988	6,759
Green	12,317	4,105	2,463	1,759	1,368	1,119	947

Newfoundland & Labrador:

D'Hondt - Newfoundland & Labrador (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	61,562	30,781

NDP	70,868	35,434
Liberal	**82,344**	41,172
Green	1,954	977

Sainte-Lague - Newfoundland & Labrador (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	61,562	20,520
NDP	70,868	23,622
Liberal	**82,344**	27,448
Green	1,954	651

D'Hondt - Newfoundland & Labrador (MMP):				
	1	2	3	4
Conservative	***61,562***	**30,781**	20,520	15,390
NDP	***70,868***	***35,434***	23,622	17,717
Liberal	***82,344***	***41,172***	***27,448***	20,586
Green	1,954	977	651	488

Sainte-Lague - Newfoundland & Labrador (MMP)				
	1	3	5	7
Conservative	***61,562***	**20,520**	12,312	8,794
NDP	***70,868***	***23,622***	14,173	10,124
Liberal	***82,344***	***27,448***	***16,468***	11,763
Green	1,954	651	390	279

Prince Edward Island:

D'Hondt - Prince Edward Island (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	**32,548**	16,274
NDP	12,135	6,067
Liberal	32,380	16,190
Green	1,895	947

Sainte-Lague - Prince Edward Island (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	**32,548**	10,849

NDP	12,135	4,045
Liberal	32,380	10,793
Green	1,895	631

D'Hondt - Prince Edward Island (MMP):			
	1	2	3
Conservative	***32,548***	**16,274**	10,849
NDP	12,135	6,067	4,045
Liberal	***32,380***	***16,190***	10,793
Green	1,895	947	631

Sainte-Lague - Prince Edward Island (MMP)			
	1	3	5
Conservative	***32,548***	10,849	6,509
NDP	**12,135**	4,045	2,427
Liberal	***32,380***	***10,793***	6,476
Green	1,895	631	379

Northwest Territories:

D'Hondt - Northwest Territories (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	5,001	2,500
NDP	**7,140**	3,570
Liberal	2,872	1,436
Green	477	238

Sainte-Lague - Northwest Territories (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	5,001	1,667
NDP	**7,140**	2,380
Liberal	2,872	957
Green	477	159

D'Hondt - Northwest Territories (MMP):		
	1	2
Conservative	**5,001**	2,500

NDP	***7,140***	3,570
Liberal	2,872	1,436
Green	477	238

Sainte-Lague - Northwest Territories (MMP)		
	1	3
Conservative	**5,001**	1,667
NDP	***7,140***	2,380
Liberal	2,872	957
Green	477	159

Yukon Territory:

D'Hondt - Yukon Territory (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	**5,422**	2,711
NDP	2,308	1,154
Liberal	5,290	2,645
Green	3,037	1,518

Sainte-Lague - Yukon Territory (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	**5,422**	1,807
NDP	2,308	769
Liberal	5,290	1,763
Green	3,037	1,012

D'Hondt - Yukon Territory (MMP):		
	1	2
Conservative	***5,422***	2,711
NDP	2,308	1,154
Liberal	**5,290**	2,645
Green	3,037	1,518

Sainte-Lague - Yukon Territory (MMP)		
	1	3

Conservative	***5,422***	1,807
NDP	2,308	769
Liberal	**5,290**	1,763
Green	3,037	1,012

Nunavut:

D'Hondt - Nunavut (Parallel):		
	1	2
Conservative	**3,930**	1,965
NDP	1,525	762
Liberal	2,260	1,130
Green	160	80

Sainte-Lague - Nunavut (Parallel)		
	1	3
Conservative	**3,930**	1,310
NDP	1,525	508
Liberal	2,260	753
Green	160	53

D'Hondt - Nunavut (MMP):		
	1	2
Conservative	***3,930***	1,965
NDP	1,525	762
Liberal	**2,260**	1,130
Green	160	80

Sainte-Lague - Nunavut (MMP)		
	1	3
Conservative	***3,930***	1,310
NDP	1,525	508
Liberal	**2,260**	753
Green	160	53