

Town Hall Notes

Background

- Trudeau promised that the 2015 election would be the last under the First-Past-the-Post system.
- The Committee on Electoral Reform is travelling across the country to solicit input from Canadians.
- Nathan Cullen, the NDP Critic for Democratic Reform, managed to get the government to change the makeup of the committee to include representation from all the different parties on the committee.
- There is a very tight timeline for moving forward with reform.
- Currently the government has not put any specific proposals on the table for consideration.

Key questions

- How is the current system working?
- What is the Electoral Reform Timeline?
- What is Alternative Vote/Ranked Ballot?
- What is Proportional Representation and how will it work?

Presenters

Dr. Maxwell Cameron

- We are in an important civic moment.
- Canadians are fortunate to live in a democracy that works well. But it's not perfect and there's a growing sense of concern that our democracy is underperforming. Symptoms include: lower voter turnout, declining trust in institutions.
- The Westminster style favours a concentration of political power. This was ramped up during the Harper era.
- We are lucky in Canada that we recruit high-calibre politicians. However, the function of Parliament is being increasingly eclipsed by the powerful people who run political parties.
- One of the primary issues is that it creates 'false majority' governments. Under our single-member plurality system, all an MP needs to win is to have the most number of votes. Other features of this system:
 - o party leaders aspire to form majority government and are disappointed when they instead get, e.g., minority governments
 - o parties can get majorities and thus govern as they please
 - o allows for a gulf between a party's supporters and Canadians generally (e.g. the gulf between the extreme wing of the Conservative party and Canadians generally, the majority of whom didn't vote for Conservatives)
 - o small parties are punished, getting very little representation relative to votes for their candidates.
 - o politics becomes a 'life and death' struggle to be either government or opposition
- Fairvote has presented a compelling argument for a system of proportional representation ('PR')
- Critics of PR are concerned about coalitions—but coalitions may not be such a bad thing.
 - o Coalitions mean more representation from smaller parties.
 - o After all: Parliament shouldn't be an area for competition. It should be a place where Parliamentarians work together for the good of the country.

Jana Rayne MacDonald (Fairvote Vancouver)

Town Hall Notes

- Please see attached slides

Open Mic – Audience Questions/Comments

Proportional Representation

- Many people don't vote right now, under FPTP, because they feel it won't make a difference under FPTP. Under a more proportional system, the idea of a wasted vote would be addressed.
- Under PR, voters will get many more choices. This abundance of choice shouldn't disincentivize potential voters; countries under PR systems see an average of 7.5% higher turnout.
- It would be great if Canadians could hear 'lessons learned' from those who've lived in countries with PR systems. The government should take an active role in educating and explaining the changes to Canadians.
- If we had had proportional representation last election, I would not have voted strategically last election.
- Moving to a proportional system will change the dynamics and allow people to vote for whom they really want. And this is foundation of democracy: everyone's voting counting. But it will also require more money to carry out elections.
- PR also brings a range of other benefits. For example: higher environmental outcomes, better fiscal outcomes, more voter engagement, more women and minorities, greater social equality, and a much more favourable perception of the government by the population.
- Do parties have more power under PR? No, as long as candidate lists curated by parties are revealed ('open lists'), because voters will then have a chance to vote for candidates within the party, giving them a chance to make an informed choice.

Ranked Ballot

- Ranked ballot (or preferential voting) is like 'FPTP on steroids' because of the lack of proportionality.

Questions and Comments about different models of PR/MMP

- Even under a MMP system, there would still be many ridings with type SMP—ridings where population density is very low.
- Urban Rural PR at first glance appears complicated, but not necessarily. Let's wait for the government to model these alternatives before casting final judgment.
- Electoral reform may not require changing the boundaries, but it would certainly require adding more seats in the House of Commons. Boundaries are periodically redrawn in response to demographic shifts.
- A well-functioning electoral system depends on having a strong political culture, as well as effective voter education campaigns and adequate election spending
- Do these new systems increase the possibility of fringe parties? Depends at what level you set the threshold at; 5% is generally accepted as a fair threshold.
- There is a clear need for the government to fund different modeling options with proposed changes to our electoral system so that Canadians can have a better understanding of what their riding might look like with the proposed changes and how it may impact their riding.

Referendum

Town Hall Notes

- It was also noted that a referendum was held in BC for electoral Reform but the referendum failed. The threshold for that referendum was raised to 60%.
- Question was asked about how people felt about holding a referendum. It was noted that the Conservatives are calling for one and the government has not made that commitment.
- A referendum can be polluted and distorted such that there is no change in the end.
- We may not get our first or ideal choice for electoral reform. Question was asked about which system is a better system: MPR or STV? Response: So far, there really is no consensus as to what system is best. Majority of Canadians want change, but the public judgment is still out on the question of what kind of change to our electoral system. Some will say that any change is better.

Mandatory Voting and Electronic Voting

- Questions and concerns were raised about mandatory voting and electronic voting. How could mandatory voting be implemented?
- Perhaps mandatory voting could be implemented with a fine, for example. Another option is by giving people a tax benefit if they vote.
- In another town hall 98% of attendees rejected the idea of mandatory voting. One possible benefit of mandatory voting is that campaigns no longer need to 'pull the vote' and so campaigns can be more about substance.

Alternative Voting Systems

STV, MMP, RU-PR

<http://www.fairvote.ca/fvc-submission-to-erre/>

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government#a9>

STV

Multi member ridings

Ranked Ballot

Quota system

Surplus vote redistribution

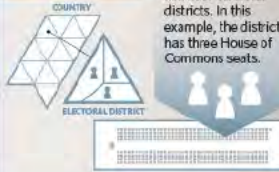
Roughly equal votes per candidate

Cross party voting

Single Transferable Vote

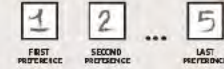
Election Is Called

The country has been divided into multi-member electoral districts. In this example, the district has three House of Commons seats.



RANKING

Five candidates run for the three seats in the electoral district. Voters rank them based on their preferences.



Count 1

To be elected, three candidates need to meet or exceed the vote quota. A vote quota is based on a formula involving votes cast and available seats.



Extra Count: Step 1

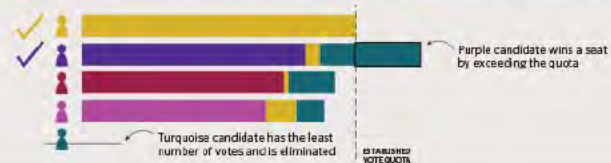
Second-preference votes on the excess ballots of the elected Yellow candidate are reallocated to the respective candidates.



Extra Count: Step 2

Second-preference votes on the ballots of the eliminated Turquoise candidate are reallocated to the respective candidates.

This extra count process continues until three candidates are elected in the electoral district



Possible STV Ballot

4 candidates to be elected

Number one or more candidates in the order of your choice

Conservative Party	Liberal Party	NDP	Green Party	Independents
<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME
<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME	<input type="checkbox"/> Firstname LASTNAME
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STV regional riding sizes

Regional ridings can be created by joining existing ridings into super ridings

Riding size depends on population density, geography, demographics

Ridings could be as low as 2 member in rural areas, or as high as 8-10 member ridings

Larger ridings improve proportionality

Possibly make local representation more challenging

Offers access to more MPs access per voter alliances

FPTP



40% of voters represented

STV



94% of voters represented

MMP

1 vote for local MP

1 vote for regional MP

Vote using FPTP or ranked ballot

FVC - Open list system

Candidates can be on both lists

Cross party voting



Mixed Member Proportional

Nominations and Party Lists



Before election day, parties nominate candidates to run in each electoral district, and they also create party lists

Citizens vote for a local representative and for a political party

OUTCOME

Turquoise party has won the most seats

PARTY	RESULTS	% OF VOTES	% OF SEATS	NUMBER OF SEATS (OUT OF 338)
		38	38	128
		26	26	88
		20	20	68
		16	16	54

NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED MPs

NUMBER OF "TOP UP" SEATS

The seats added go to candidates from the party list to provide a proportional result

Conclusion

Each party's seat count is proportional to the share of votes it received in the election



Seats are held by a combination of directly elected MPs and candidates from party lists

You have **two** votes:

Paper Ballot

1 Please mark an "X" beside one candidate for LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENTElie Salibi
ConservativeDavid McGuinly
LiberalJames McLaren
NDPMick Kitor
GreenRomeo Belai
Independent**2** Please mark an "X" beside one candidate for REGIONAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. [REDACTED]

A vote for a candidate counts as a vote for that candidate's party. This vote helps elect regional MPs, topping-up the numbers of MPs from your region so the total is proportional to the votes for each party.

Conservative

Liberal

NDP

Green

John Baird
ConservativeMauro Bélanger
LiberalPaul Dewar
NDPJen Hunter
GreenScott Reid
ConservativeDavid McGuinly
LiberalMarlene Rivier
NDPJean-Luc Cooke
GreenPierre Lemieux
ConservativeTed Hsu
LiberalDaniel Beals
NDPMary Stude
GreenPierre Poilievre
ConservativeAnita Vandenbeld
LiberalElsine MacDonald
NDPEric Walton
GreenGordon O'Connor
ConservativeJulie Bourgoin
LiberalTrevor Haché
NDPCaroline Rioux
GreenGord Brown
ConservativeKaren McCommon
LiberalEoin Peters
NDPJohn Hogg
GreenDaryl Kramp
ConservativePeter Tinsley
LiberalMichael McMahon
NDPSylvie Lemieux
GreenRoyal Galipeau
ConservativeDavid Bertschi
LiberalBonnie Jean-Louis
NDPJohn Baranyi
GreenCheryl Gallant
ConservativeMajority Loveys
LiberalJames McLaren
NDPMick Kitor
GreenGuy Lauzon
ConservativeRyan Keon
LiberalMartine Cénatus
NDPRoseanné Van Schie
GreenAlicia Gordon
ConservativeDavid Remington
LiberalDoug Smyth
NDPElie Salibi
ConservativeBernadette Clément
LiberalMary Rita Holland
NDP

MMP ridings & regions

Single member ridings on average about 60% larger than now

Number of list MPs depends of region size

Both affect degree of proportionality and local representation

Need a “Made in Canada” balance: experts suggests 35-45% regional MP seats and 55-65% local MP seats

Rural-Urban PR

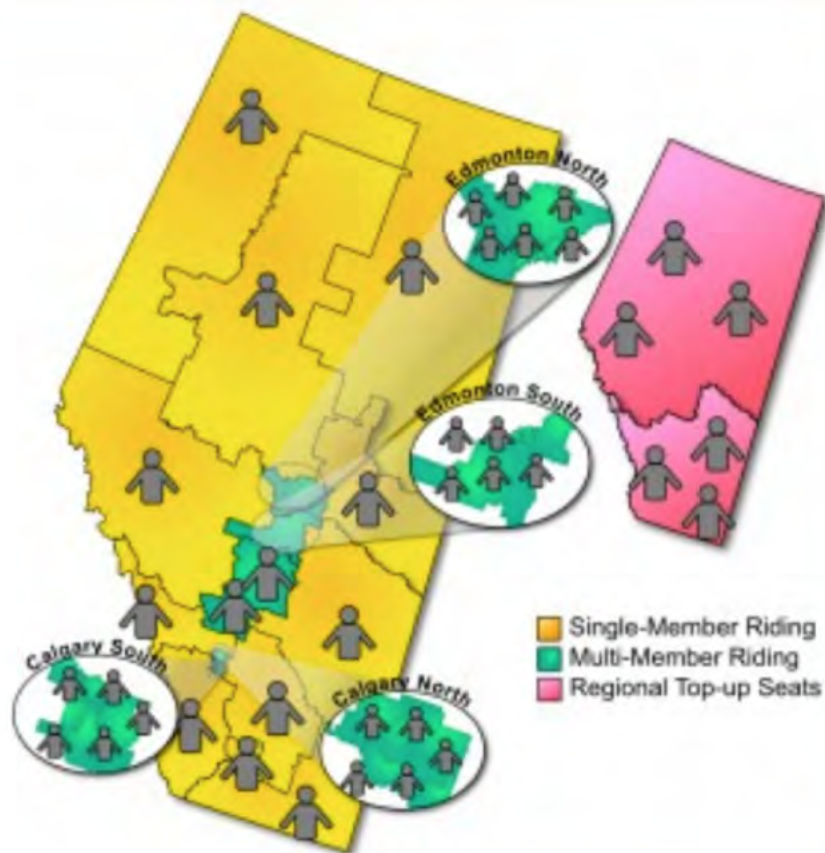
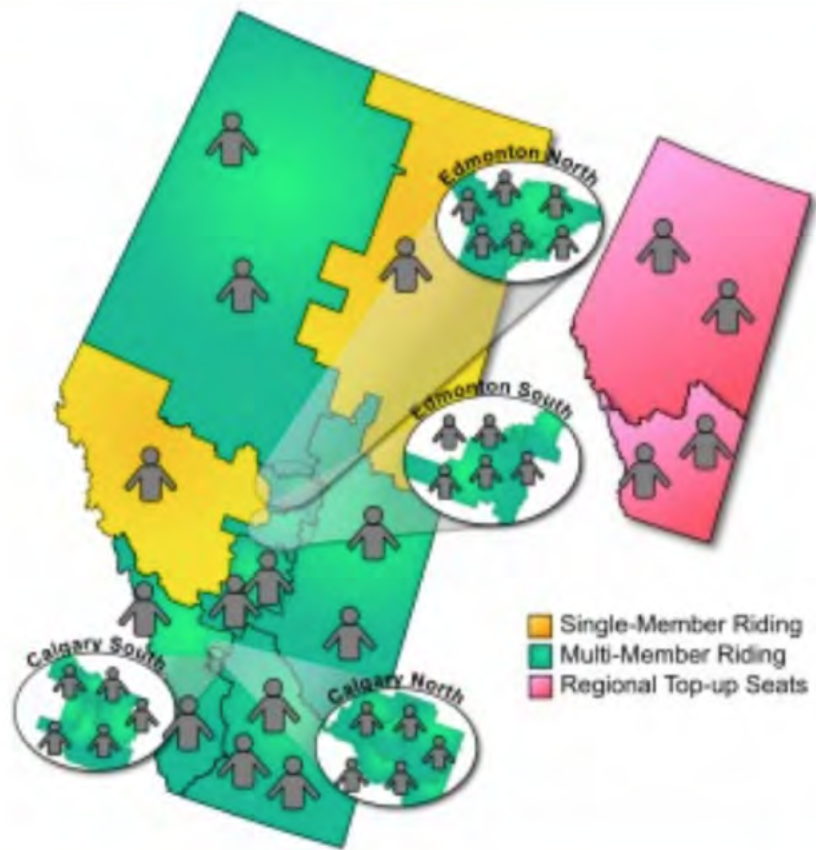
HYBRID SYSTEM

Single member ridings in rural & small urban areas - reduce proportionality

Multi member ridings in large urban areas - increase proportionality

Regional MPs - 13-15% - open list or best runner up system - increase proportionality

Riding & Voting design options



Rural-Urban ridings & regions

Single member ridings - up to 25% of MPs

More multi-member ridings leads to less regional MPs

Highly proportionality

High degree of local representation

Highly flexible 'Made in Canada' system

Electoral System Comparison

FIRST PAST THE POST

- one size fits only some voters some of the time system

MMP, STV or RU-PR

- Systems with a 'flexible fit'
- Can be designed to include and fit all Canadians
- Make Every Vote count