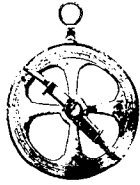


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59. For example see E. A. Partridge, *A War On Poverty* (Winnipeg: 1925-28); W. C. Good, *Production and Distribution in Canada from the Farmer's Point of View* (St. Anne de Bellevue: 1919); E. Porritt, *Sixty Years of Protection in Canada* (Winnipeg: 1912); J. J. Harpell, *Canadian National Economy* (Toronto: 1911); Percy H. Scott, *The New Slavery* (Toronto: 1914); C. W. Peterson, *Wake Up Canada* (Toronto: 1919).

One Man One Vote: One Vote One Value

FRED SCHINDELER*

Most definitions of democracy recognize as a fundamental principle the necessity that the decision-makers in a polity be chosen by a majority of the people and that ultimately their decisions must be acceptable to a majority of those same people. Whether one adheres to Abraham Lincoln's simple "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" or Joseph A. Schumpeter's more sophisticated "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's votes",¹ one's conception of the democratic method must always involve some notion that the people have the principal control over the direction of public policy.² The body of the

citizens must make a choice of leadership and hence of programmes, for, if political power is not wielded by those whom the people choose, there is no guarantee that it will be directed to ends that the people can accept. All individuals must be given an equal opportunity to choose, and all choices must be accorded equal weight.³ Where distortions of the people's choice occur through the vagaries of an electoral system, the onus is on the proponents of such a system to show that it produces conditions so favourable or so necessary that it should be retained in spite of the inequities it produces.

There is now some doubt that the single-member, simple-plurality system used in Canada effectively fulfils the democratic requirements suggested above. Advocacy of the single-member, simple-plurality system assumes that the decision-makers in a parliamentary democracy have been chosen by the people when a Govern-

*I would like to acknowledge the assistance that I have received from two of my former students, Robert Drummond and John Witham.

ment has been formed which can command the support of a Parliament — that Parliament being composed of individuals, each of whom has been the choice of a plurality in one of a number of approximately equal divisions of the electorate. When the decision-makers sit in that Parliament, require its majority support, and periodically seek the approval of the electorate for the retention of their positions, the basic requirements of a democratic polity are assumed to have been met. However, the advent of disciplined political parties has given rise to such fundamental changes in our representative bodies that the single-member, simple-plurality system no longer satisfies the basic premise of democratic government. Contrary to the popular assumptions underlying parliamentary government, the composition of the decision-making body (i.e. the Cabinet) is determined not by ad hoc coalitions of individuals in Parliament but by the party or parties which control a majority of the seats in Parliament. If the facts were in keeping with the theory, the basic elements of representative democracy would be preserved as long as the members of Parliament were chosen in any fair and equitable manner by the electors in their constituencies. However, the new facts require not so much the fair representation of *constituencies* as the fair representation of *parties*.

Since policy and leadership are determined by parties acting as cohesive units, the basic precondition of democracy can only be met when the electors' choice of parties is accurately reflected in the composition of the legislature. When parties in Parliament receive either a substantially higher or a substantially lower proportion of the available seats than the proportion of the popular vote which they have received, the Government which is formed as a result of the Parliament's composition is not the choice of the people, and the basic requirement of democratic government is not fulfilled.

That such is often the case one can readily perceive from the evidence. In the 1951 British general election, for example, the incumbent Labour party lost 20 seats and control of the government, although it had *increased* its share of the popular vote from 46.1% in 1950 to 48.8%,

and it still led the victorious Conservatives by .8 percentage points. Such outstandingly inequitable results are admittedly rare, but an equally damaging injustice may result when the government elected is the people's choice but is given more strength than the people's votes would seem to decree. In the Canadian general election of 1935, for example, the Liberal party increased its proportion of the available seats from 37.1% to 71.0% and asserted that its tremendously augmented parliamentary support was a reflection of the people's mandate for strong government. In that election, however, the proportion of the people's votes going to the Liberals had not risen overwhelmingly in a grand gesture of support, but had in fact fallen .1 percentage points.

But it is the minor parties, of particular value and significance in Canadian political history, who have suffered most from the vagaries of the single-member, simple-plurality system. In every nation-wide general election since its formation, the CCF-NDP has received a smaller proportion of the seats in the Canadian House of Commons than its proportion of the popular vote has warranted, and the discrepancies have generally been large. In a recent Alberta provincial election, the NDP lost its only seat in the legislature despite an increase in its proportion of the popular vote from nine to nearly sixteen percent. Social Credit, because of the concentration of its popular support in three or four regions, has suffered less from the inequities of the system, but since 1958 it too has had a lower proportion of seats than votes.⁴ In the 1963 general election in Ontario (which is discussed later in this article) a majority of the people voted for parties other than the Progressive Conservative Party, and yet the Progressive Conservative Party obtained a vast majority of the seats in the House. The NDP received 15.4% of the vote but only 6.4% of the seats; the Liberals received 35.1% of the vote but only 21.3% of the seats; however, the Conservatives, with 48.4% of the vote, won 71.3% of the seats.⁵

Arguments for the rejection or reform of the single-member, simple-plurality system have generally been based on equity considerations such as those elaborated above, while proponents

of the system's retention have usually preferred to argue not that the present system is ideally equitable, but rather that it operates most effectively to promote certain other conditions which are as beneficial as mathematical equality. Thus, for example, while Herman Finer has asserted:

It is, in the long run, essential that the general body of citizens shall be satisfied with the equity of the system of government, and they are most likely to be satisfied if it can be shown that government rests on a majority of popular votes as well as a majority of seats . . . ⁶,

D. A. Rustow has countered that:

where P. R. with cabinet instability is substituted for a plurality system with cabinet stability the voter trades power distributed with slight short-run inequalities for permanent impotence parcelled out with mathematical precision. ⁷.

It has frequently been conceded by the advocates of reform that the single-member, simple-plurality system is more conducive to cabinet stability than any proportional representation system could be. Recently, however, there has been an increasing tendency to question this premise; it is asserted on the one hand that the simple-plurality system is overrated in its ability to create artificial majorities where minorities would otherwise have existed,⁸ and on the other hand it is argued that proportional representation is often unjustly blamed for creating splinter groups that might have appeared in any case.⁹

In fact, it is also unresolved whether minority governments may not be the most beneficial in certain conditions. The stability lauded by the advocates of the simple-plurality system can be exaggerated into stagnation or perverted into arrogance, so that minority government becomes an appealing alternative. There is some justification for arguing that the minority governments of 1957, 1963, and 1965 in Canada's Federal Parliament have been among her best, while the vast majorities given to Mackenzie King in 1935 and to Diefenbaker in 1958 (partly by the people and

partly by the electoral system) issued in chaos and procrastination.

Thus, there appears to be no possible defence of the single-member, simple-plurality system against charges of inequity and, although the system may produce a degree of cabinet stability, it is questionable whether such stability is always as desirable as some theorists believe. Now if it can be shown that the system produces conditions directly inimical to the public good, a convincing case for reform will be established. Indeed strong criticisms have been made on these grounds.

The line which these criticisms were to take was suggested by Professor Rustow's admission (in his 1950 *Journal of Politics* article) that the equity and efficiency of the single-member, simple-plurality system depend on its operating in a polity in which crystallized majorities do not exist in individual constituencies or regions. The point that the electoral system can in fact enhance the importance of such regional majorities, thereby endangering national unity by accentuating regional differences was made by other theorists. W. A. Lewis, for example, argued in his classic *Politics in West Africa* that single-member, simple-plurality systems are dysfunctional for stability in polities which have cleavages of a religious, tribal, or ethnic nature, since parties tend to arise which become identified with these region-centred groups and the political conflicts which result are violent in the extreme.¹⁰ A. C. Cairns, of the University of British Columbia, argued in a paper presented at the last annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association that "the party system, importantly conditioned by the electoral system, exacerbates the very cleavages it is credited with healing."¹¹ He cited evidence for the contention that minor parties are discouraged by the system only when their support is diffuse — that is, only when they aspire to be national rather than sectional parties. Sectionalism is rewarded by the system in that parties are wisest when they appeal in their campaigning to geographical regions where rewards will be greatest.

Cairns made the further point that party policy will be affected not only by the need to woo cer-

tain regional blocs but by the availability of personnel from different regions in the party caucus.

The relative, or on occasion total, absence of intraparty spokesmen for particular sectional communities seriously affects the image of the parties as national bodies, deprives the party concerned of articulate proponents of particular sectional interests in caucus and in the House, and, it can be deductively suggested, renders the actual members of the Parliamentary party personally less sensitive to the interests of the unrepresented sections than they would otherwise be.¹²

The danger of such a development was seen by J. S. Mill:

In the absence of its natural defenders, the interest of the excluded is always in danger of being overlooked; and, when looked at, is seen with very different eyes than those of the persons whom it directly concerns.¹³

That parties become identified with regions is inevitable because of the system, and Cairns produced figures which indicate that the Liberal party has, in every federal general election since 1921, secured a greater proportion of seats than votes from the province of Quebec, while the Conservative Party, in the same period, consistently received a lower proportion of seats than votes from that province.¹⁴

One last criticism of the single-member, simple-plurality system which Cairns made may be his most telling. He argued that the tone of Canadian politics has been set by the electoral system to a great degree. The system's propensity to accentuate sectional cleavages at the expense of social ones — cleavages of residence rather than of stratification — has lent a conservative tone to the political scene. He cited with approval John Porter's conclusion that brokerage politics which seek to reconcile the competing demands of regions rather than of classes "remove from the political system that element of dialectic which is the source of creative politics."¹⁵ Class politics, he suggested, are inherently more stable than

sectional politics, since sectional politics tend to call into question the legitimacy of the system as a whole. Sections can attempt secession; classes cannot.

The realization that the present system produces conditions which are inimical to both the equity and the efficiency of the political system has led a number of people to propose some kind of proportional representation system for the parliamentary democracies, and more particularly for the Canadian federal and provincial governments. Most systems suggested are variations of the "list" system (such as that used in the German Weimar Republic) or of the "single transferable vote" system, often called the "Hare" system after its originator, Thomas Hare. Occasionally a second ballot or run-off election is suggested.

The list system allows people to vote only for the *party* of their choice. Each party puts up a list of candidates and voters cast their ballots for one or the other of the parties which have put up candidate lists. Each party gets the same proportion of seats as its proportion of the votes cast, starting with the names on the top of the list. This system does guarantee proportional representation but it does not allow individual members of parliament to represent particular constituencies, and, if a party is not democratically organized, a small party clique can soon determine the composition of the party list. Often, position on the list can become a prize so eagerly sought that corruption is invited.

The "Hare" system is currently used for senatorial elections in Australia. While this system also guarantees representation according to electoral support, it does have a number of disadvantages. Besides being very complicated, it too breaks down the relationship between members and their constituencies because, in order to make the system work, there should usually be at least half a dozen representatives for each multiple-member constituency. The fact that multiple-member constituencies are needed in order to use the Hare system also means that the Ontario legislature, for example, would either have to be enlarged to approximately six times its present size or else have groups of its constituencies amalgamated. In addition, the single

transferable vote system involves the counting of second choices as if they were first choices in order to bring about a proportionally representative result.

The run-off or second ballot election (currently used in French presidential elections) has disadvantages if used for parliamentary choices, since second-ballot victory is often by inter-party transaction at the expense of ideals and programs; electors may use the first ballot for reasons of sympathy or personal rancour and not vote "politically" until the second round. The two ballots result in extra cost, and many voters may not bother to vote twice. Occasionally, voters may vote in the first round primarily to force a second vote.

One possible alternative system providing for representation according to popular vote but avoiding the disadvantages associated with the list and Hare systems of voting, is the following, based upon the system adopted by the Bonn government in 1953:

1. Each voter would receive two ballots: ballot "C" would contain a list of the *candidates* running in the voter's constituency and ballot "P" would consist of a list of the *parties* with candidates running in the province, although not necessarily in the voter's constituency. The voter would indicate the candidate of his choice and the party of his choice by putting x's in the appropriate places.

2. Candidates who received over 50% of the "C" ballots in their constituencies would be elected automatically as long as their party received enough "P" ballots to entitle them to that many seats. To determine whether or not a party had received enough "P" ballots there must be established a quota for each seat.

3. The quota of "P" ballots required for each candidate elected would be arrived at by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{total number of "P" ballots}}{\text{total number of seats in the province} + 1} + 1 = \text{quota.}$$

Using the 1963 Ontario General election and assuming, for the sake of argument, that voters who voted for a particular candidate would also,

if they had the opportunity, cast their "P" ballots for the party of that candidate, one gets the following formula and quota:

$$\frac{2,173,982}{108 + 1} + 1 = 19,964 \text{ (see Appendix A).}$$

4. For every candidate elected by "C" ballots the quota of "P" ballots would be subtracted from the party's total number of "P" ballots — regardless of the actual number of "C" ballots that the candidate received. Thus, when the proposed system is applied to the 1963 figures, the Progressive Conservative Party elects 55 candidates on the basis of "C" ballots. The quota of 19,964 is then multiplied by 55 and the resulting product of 1,098,020 is subtracted from the total number of "P" ballots received by the Progressive Conservative Party. In the case of the Progressive Conservative Party, this process leaves the party with no surplus "P" ballots. However, the Liberal Party only elects 7 candidates with majorities of the "C" ballots in their constituencies and therefore they have 622,721 "P" ballots left over after this process is completed. The quota of 19,964 will divide into the Liberal surplus of "P" ballots 31 times, thus entitling the Liberals to another 31 seats. In the case of the NDP no candidates are elected on the basis of "C" ballots but dividing the quota into their total "P" ballots we find that they are entitled to a total of 17 seats.

5. The extra seats that a party is entitled to on the basis of its "P" ballots would then be assigned to those candidates in the party who had received the highest proportion of "C" ballots in their constituencies. Thus, for example, the first NDP seat would go to the candidate of that party who received the highest percentage vote in his constituency — in this case the candidate in York South who obtained 47.5% of the vote in his riding. The second NDP seat would go to the candidate of that party with the second highest percentage vote in his constituency — in this case the candidate for Woodbine — and so on until all 17 seats were filled.

6. In most cases, the candidates elected by the process explained in the preceding paragraph

would be elected under the existing electoral system since they already have pluralities of the "C" ballots. However, in some cases the candidate entitled to the extra party seat might actually have fewer votes than some other candidates in his constituency.

For example, applying the new system to the 1963 vote, this would have been the case in Hamilton-Centre and 22 other constituencies. However, since none of the candidates in such constituencies received majorities and since the pluralities are generally very small, this peculiarity of the new system does not seem to be a very significant violation of any democratic principle when it is compared to the fact that the existing system not only results in the election of candidates in spite of the fact that a majority of the people have voted against them, but also results in the winning party getting an inordinate proportion of the seats in the House.

7. If the candidate who was entitled to the extra party seat for the Liberal party, for example, happened to be in a constituency which was won by the candidate of another party on the basis of the "C" ballot, that Liberal candidate would be passed over and the extra Liberal seat would go to the next most popular man in that party. Thus, using the 1963 figures, the Liberal candidate in Kent West received 46.3% of the vote and would therefore have been more entitled to an extra Liberal party seat than was the Liberal candidate in Kingston who received only 44.1% of the vote in his constituency. However, the Progressive Conservative candidate in Kent West would have won that seat on the basis of a majority of the "C" ballots and therefore the Liberal candidate in that constituency would have been passed over and the extra seat would have gone to the Liberal party candidate in Kingston.

8. Should it ever happen that a party won more seats on the basis of "C" ballots than it was entitled to according to its proportion of the "P" ballots, its low men could be replaced by candidates from the other parties. For example, in 1963 the low men for the Conservatives (on "C" ballot votes) were Carton (Armourdale) and Brunelle (Cochrane North). These men could have been required to give up their seats to the next highest candidates in their ridings (Liberals

in both cases). The Liberals would then have had two more seats than they were entitled to and their two low men would have had to give up their seats (Sandford in Lakeshore and Hollingworth in Armourdale). These two seats would then go to the New Democrats, and the overall distribution of seats would approximate that of the popular vote.

However, in the case of Armourdale for example, a candidate with a majority would have been replaced by a candidate who had won only 20.2% of the popular vote in his constituency. This possibility presents a serious problem, for, while it might be acceptable to replace candidates who would have won with pluralities under the simple-plurality system of elections, it would probably not be acceptable to replace a candidate who attained a majority of "C" ballots in his own riding.

Alternatively, the two low Conservatives on the "C" ballot could be allowed to retain their seats, and the New Democrats could be permitted to have two members-at-large (representing no single constituency) chosen to rectify the distribution in the House. They could be the next highest NDP candidates on "C" ballots, or by-passed candidates.

As may be seen in Appendix B, if this proposed system had been applied to the Ontario General election of 1963, it would have resulted in each party getting a proportion of the seats in the House which would have approximated its proportion of the popular vote so that the political complexion of the House would have much more accurately reflected the wishes of the electors. Thus, the new system gives all of the benefits of proportional representation, but avoids most of the disadvantages associated with other "PR" schemes. Ontario could adopt the new system and still maintain the same number of constituencies that it now has and each constituency would have its own MP who would in every case have substantial support in the constituency and in most cases would have a majority or plurality of "C" ballots. Since there would only be one representative for each constituency it would be possible to hold by-elections when needed whereas this is impossible under the Hare or list systems of voting. Under the new system voters

could still use the "x" mark on the ballot instead of having to indicate their preferences as is the case with most "PR" systems. This also means that no second choices would ever count as first choices as must be the case under the Hare system. Furthermore, the system proposed here could readily be adapted to discourage the proliferation of minor parties. All that would need to be done would be to specify that no party could have any seats in the Legislative Assembly unless it received a certain proportion of the total "P" ballot vote.

Under the system proposed here no elector would need fear that he was "wasting" his vote. Even if a voter were the only member of his party in his constituency he could still cast his "P" ballot for that party and thus contribute to the election of one or more candidates for that party on the basis of its "P" ballots. Thus, even a minority within one constituency could receive representation in the legislature so long as it was part of a minority group in the province which was large enough to reach the necessary quota of "P" ballots. This fact would make candidature much more attractive to supporters of minority parties than is the case under the present system and it would perhaps help to attract good candidates for the major parties as well, since they

would not necessarily have to win more votes than any other candidates in their respective constituencies to be elected.

This new system would also give voters a great deal more choice than they now have. In effect a voter now has only one ballot to cast for the local candidate of his choice, the party of his choice, and the party leader of his choice. Under the new system a voter could split his ballot, voting for the candidate of one party but casting his "P" ballot for another party.

If there is a real desire to preserve the democratic method in full recognition of all that that method requires, the scheme outlined here provides a reasonable means of doing so. Parties are represented in proportion to their support in the electorate, and hence policy and leadership are equally the choice of all the voters. At the same time, the undesirable aspects of the other proportional representation schemes are avoided, and the best features of the single-member system are retained. There has been some concern lately that popular participation has been lacking in public affairs. Such a scheme as the one here outlined would make such participation more meaningful and more rewarding since it would restore equality to the value of men's votes.

APPENDIX A

THE QUOTA APPLIED TO THE 1963 ONTARIO GENERAL ELECTION

(Assuming that "P" ballots would go to the parties of the candidates who received the "X's".)

Candidates elected with majority on "C" ballots		Total "P" ballots
PC	55	1,052,512
Liberal	7	762,469
NDP	—	340,208
Lib. lab.	—	6,774
Ind.	—	2,656
S.C.	—	2,313
Communist	—	1,654
Ind. P.C.	—	5,190
Ind. Lib.	—	103
Social Labor	—	103
		<hr/>
		2,173,982
	Quota per seat	19,964

		Total Seats
P.C.		
Total "P" ballots	— 1,052,512	
Less the quota × 55 for the 55 seats won by "C" ballots	— 1,098,020	55
No additional seats		—
Liberal		
Total "P" ballots	— 762,469	
Less the quota × 7	— 139,748	7
	<hr/>	
	622,721	
31 additional seats		31
N.D.P.		
Total "P" ballots	— 340,208	
None elected by "C" ballots		—
17 seats for "P" ballots		17
Total seats		110

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF THE 1963 ONTARIO RESULTS UNDER THE EXISTING SYSTEM AND THE PROPOSED SYSTEM

	Present System			New System		
	Percentage of Votes	Percentage of Seats	Number of Seats	Percentage of Votes	Percentage of Seats	Number of Seats
P.C.	48.4	71.3	77	48.4	50.9	55
Liberal	35.1	21.3	23	35.1	35.2	38
N.D.P.	15.4	6.4	7	15.4	14.8	17
Liberal Labor			1			—
		TOTAL	108			110*

*Includes 2 members-at-large for the N.D.P.

NOTES

1. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, New York, Harper and Row (3rd Edition), 1950, p. 269.
2. Cf. Charles Merriam's definition of democracy:
Democracy is a form of political association in which the ends of government are habitually determined by the people acting in accordance with appropriate understandings and procedures providing for popular participation and consent.
Systematic Politics, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945, p. 199.
3. It seems self-evident that democracy and political equality are inseparable. If any voice is to be given to the people, it must be given equally to all, or at least a part of the people will be silenced.
4. The sixties may become known as the decade in which the Social Credit Party aspired to national status and sought, if not to appeal to nation-wide classes, at least to attract support from several regions. It appears that the electoral system is exacting a price for this action.
5. If the electoral system is instrumental in maintaining stability, it seems to have been too effective in some Canadian provinces, having turned them into effectively one-party states. Ontario has been Conservative since 1943, and the opposition parties have little hope of becoming the Government within the next few years. Alberta has had a Social Credit government since 1935, and recently has had almost no effective parliamentary opposition. Newfoundland has been Liberal since its entry to Confederation in 1949, and in 1959 the Liberal Party captured 31 out of 36 seats with only 58% of the popular vote. In Prince Edward Island, the Liberal Government from 1945 to 1949 had no parliamentary opposition, since it controlled every seat in the 30 seat legislature. It accomplished this sweep with 58% of the vote.
6. Herman Finer, *The Theory and Practice of Modern Government*, London, Methuen and Company (Abridged Edition), 1961, p. 553.
7. D. A. Rustow, "Some Observations on Proportional Representation", *Journal of Politics*, XII (February 1950), p. 116.
8. See Alan C. Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada: 1921-1965", an unpublished paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 7, 1967, p. 2; and Douglas W. Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 92-94.
9. Rae points out that in four Australian elections since 1945 P.R. has produced two-party legislative competition. (*Op. Cit.* p. 95). Tasmania has had a modified version of the Hare proportional representation system since 1897, yet it retains a stable two-party system. W. A. Lewis makes the suggestion that even if proportional representation were introduced, it is unlikely that more than three or four parties would emerge in most West African states. He also argues that multi-partism and shifting coalitions are not always undesirable. (W. Arthur Lewis, *Politics in West Africa*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 79-81.)
10. Lewis, *op. cit.* pp. 70-74.
11. Cairns, *op. cit.* p. 6.
12. *Ibid.* p. 10.
13. John Stuart Mill, *On Representative Government*, London, J. M. Dent and Sons (Everyman's Library Edition), 1910, p. 209.
14. Cairns, *op. cit.* Appendix Table V.
15. John Porter, *The Verical Mosaic*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965, cited in Cairns, *op. cit.* p. 14.