

THE LOGIC OF A SUPER-LEAN APPROACH TO VOTING SYSTEM REFORM

- Why Just Ten Compensation Seats Seems About Right -

- (1) At **one-eighth** of the House in Compensation Seats (ten out of 75 or 79) our proposal is in good company:
 - (a) The landmark paper of Kent Weaver in the fall of 1997 tested a system of just **one-eleventh** of the federal House of Commons;
 - (b) The Pepin-Robarts Commission of a quarter of a century ago proposed just about 20% of the House in P. R. seats;
 - (c) **Italy** has already reduced its P. R. component in its House to **just 25%**, which is **close to half of that component in New Zealand**. There has been a serious push to bring it down even further.
- (2) Our one-eighth level appears to be **sufficient to remedy the severe problem situation of 1996**, when the group that got the most votes ended up with many fewer seats.
- (3) Our one-eighth level appears to be **sufficient to give small but reasonable representation to some small parties** in the very unusual **election of 2001**.
- (4) The part of prudence would seem to leave open the **occasional possibility of single party - majority government**. A sufficient reason would be this: such a possibility might well be the only way to cope with a minor party having a balance of power and which has become **almost impossible to deal with** (a solution which has offered historical release is an election with a public appeal for a majority government).
- (5) The **smaller the P. R. component** of the House the more real would be the chance of such an **occasional possibility**. Thus, a major argument for a small component like one-eighth.
- (6) It is also important to remember that the decisive New Zealand referendum passed with just 54%! A real squeaker! And that after two decades of voter frustration!!
It is probably true that a **prudently low** solution has a **better chance of passage** than its converse.
- (7) If a country or province "starts high" in this field, that area might easily find itself **locked in** - with **no possibility of later reduction** of the P. R. component because of the existing power and influence of the minor parties.