

# **“PLEASE SIR, I WANT SOME DEMOCRACY! “ MOVING FORWARD ON VOTING REFORM IN CANADA**

## **A PUBLIC FORUM SPONSORED BY FAIR VOTE ONTARIO**

**SAT., FEB. 21, 2009 AT THE LAW FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

### **FORUM REPORT**

#### **Introduction:**

In 2008, Fair Vote Ontario defined as one of its goals: Place Electoral Reform Back on the Ontario Political Agenda. To achieve this goal, FVO planned to facilitate discussion on acceptable alternative fair voting models, debate and propose a new reform process through which Ontarians could choose a new voting system, and sponsor a public forum with high profile speakers to address the unfinished business of voting reform in Ont. As the planning for the forum went forward, it became the place where alternative voting models and reform processes would be discussed along with re-examining our campaign strategy and our messaging and communications. In addition, the goals for the forum shifted to include putting electoral reform on the federal and the provincial agendas and to look at ways to support the referendum campaign on BC-STV in May, 2009.

What follows is a report on the forum, highlighting some of the major points made by the impressive roster of speakers. As well as the main sessions, there was an 8:30 am introductory session on voting systems which attracted an amazing 30 or so people at that early hour on a Saturday morning. Notes from the three break-out groups where participants were much involved in discussing the issues the forum focussed on can be found in the appendices attached to this report.

The sold-out crowd of about 150 people included familiar faces but also many new supporters and an unprecedented number of young people. As this report makes clear, the forum succeeded in bringing forward useful thinking and discussion in each area where FVO needs to develop further the campaign for fair voting at both the provincial and the federal levels in Ont. as well as educating fair vote supporters on BC-STV and how we can support the referendum campaign in BC.

#### **Opening the Forum:**

In her keynote address, Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, Ontario's Minister of Democratic Renewal at the time of the Ontario referendum, made several recommendations for "doing it differently" next time. From her remarks, it was clear that she felt that more

time was necessary for the referendum and citizens' assembly process to be done right. As she said, "This is complicated stuff and it takes time to educate the public. If it takes four years, take four years. If it takes two terms, take two terms." With only two years after she became the minister in charge, she noted that "it was a race against time."

As well, the government shouldn't change ministers half way through the process and because of the complexity of the task, the minister in charge should hold no other portfolio. She now would support publicly funded "yes" and "no" campaigns as they are doing in B.C. So, even though Bountrogianni believes that the religious school funding issue stole the campaign, even without this distraction, she feels there still wouldn't have been enough time for voters to become educated sufficiently to respond knowledgeably in the referendum. During the Q and A session, she pointed out that it was not only the public that need educating but the media as well – noting both their lack of interest and support for the CA process as well as the recommendation coming from it. For all these reasons, it was clear that Dr. Bountrogianni would definitely agree with the proposition that electoral reform is "unfinished business" in Ont.

### **Setting the Context: Why Talk About Reform Processes, Models, and Strategies**

**Larry Gordon, E.D. of Fair Vote Canada** provided some information about the history of the Fair Vote campaign to date plus some background for the discussions that would be taking place during the forum. This was designed in particular for people new to the fair voting campaign and as much of the content was covered in more detail during the forum, it wasn't necessary to include it here.

### **The First Session: The Way Forward – What Reform Process Should We Campaign For? What are possible next steps to move electoral reform forward provincially and federally: royal commission, a cross-Canada Citizens' Assembly, a multi-stage referendum?**

The moderator was Matthew Mendelsohn, former Deputy Minister for Democratic Reform (Ont.) and the two presenters were Jonathan Rose from Queen's University and former Education Director of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform and Patrick Boyer, former Progressive Conservative MP and author of numerous books on referendums and democratic renewal.

**Matthew Mendelsohn** opened the session with a few remarks based on lessons learned in Ont. He noted that the greatest challenge is how to move the "rich, deliberative dialogue" of the citizens' assembly process into the realm of the broader public – something that didn't happen in the Ont. referendum campaign. As well, the citizens' assembly process can't by itself make it clear in the broader public realm what the problem is that it is trying to solve so while we had a proposal coming from the CA in Ont. for a new MMP voting model, the public never really understood what the problem

was that MMP would solve. Mendelsohn suggested that we need to look for a process that combines a research driven process with a citizen driven process to help people connect the problems they see politically that they don't like – for example, regionalism in Canadian politics or the rise of the BQ in Quebec -- with the electoral system.

In his presentation, **Professor Rose** reviewed the various reform process options including royal commissions and referendums but spoke mainly about citizens' assemblies which he considers the best option as they provide a "new architecture of public participation." He was quick to add though that a two-part process is essential – the first being the development of a voting reform model by a CA but the second and just as important, the need for good public education.

In order for a CA to work at the federal level, there needs to be

- a strong warrant for reform – that is a reason why people should care about the present system and what is wrong with it;
- sufficient time for the CA to learn, consult and deliberate
- consultation needs to be both inside government and outside government and must embrace new forms of technology i.e. Facebook, YouTube
- at a cross-country level, consultation needs to be regional and local – so that citizens have an opportunity for meaningful involvement from the beginning
- public education and involvement must begin as CA process begins – not after it is finished
- diversity needs to be built into the process for good decision-making
- a CA needs external evaluation as were done in Ont. through surveys administered during the process; there are the measurable indicators that can be used
- a CA needs legitimacy and to have that it needs a good chair which both CAs in Canada had.

Rose went on to note that politicians and voters need to see the CA as equivalent to the legislature, not lesser than the elected body. As well, it's important to have political parties engaged in the voting reform deliberations and articulating a view and taking a position.

Federally, the Canada Referendum Act has strong points – it requires a yes/no question; the question need to be approved by House so this opens up chance for discussion in House as to why this is important; and the referendum has to be separate from elections.

**Rose concluded by saying that for reform activists, it's fundamental that they show that what they are proposing is not arcane or esoteric. What's important is for activists is to make the connection for citizens that the values underlying the voting reform they are promoting are values that are held by Canadians – values like fairness, equality, equality of access, and proportionality.**

**Patrick Boyer** began his remarks by noting that what we're doing is considering the direction ahead for electoral reformers. His presentation focused on three points --

- that political ethics are at play here in the responses of politicians and parties to voting reform proposals
- the importance of having concurrent activities that energize and focus citizens' views
- the important of being ready for opportunities that arise in an unexpected way.

On the question of political ethics, Boyer pointed out the inconsistency of political parties using some type of run-off system for their own internal elections, yet insisting on FPTP for public elections. He thinks they should be held to account for this – if it's good for them because it is more engaging and democratic, then why not for the rest of us.

Another dimension of the ethics issue is the fact that several politicians have supported electoral reform and pr when they were out of power – Chretien being one good example – but then abandon it once elected. Not only that, they support adding barriers to change like a 60% threshold which they would never apply to their own elections. In Boyer's view, there is an ethics question involved as these behaviours by politicians are subverting the public interest and in many instances a public commitment that has been given in public by various leaders and parties which is then abandoned – this is not honest. He suggested that we should be making these high level arguments part of our messaging and not get bogged down in argument models.

Boyer also believes that we have to work with people already in our assemblies and parliaments who support reform and make sure they speak to it continually – because, ultimately, it is politicians who will have to make the change if they get enough pressure from the public. Later in the q and a session, Boyer noted that all we need is one election breakthrough and then we'll really be able to move forward; this is one advantage of living in a federal state because it gives us different levels to move forward on.

Boyer didn't have enough time to speak about the pros and cons of referendums but did bring along free copies of the two books he has written on the topic and encourage people to take them.

In the q and a session following, Boyer pointed out to the audience that people who want power need to take it. If we want a national citizens' assembly, why don't we just set one up. We don't have to wait for parliament to do this; in Canada sovereignty rests in the people as well as the Queen.

Professor Rose added that we not only have to change the electoral system but the political culture around it with Dr. Bountrogianni adding that through education, we need to make the public more engaged and knowledgeable.

## **The Second Session: Exploring Alternatives: What Fair Voting Systems Should We Consider for Ontario and for Canada.**

The moderator for the session was Wayne Smith, former president of Fair Vote Canada and the two presenters were Professor Henry Milner, author of *Making Every Vote Count* and other books on democratic reform and Stuart Parker, a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto and former leader of the BC Green Party.

**Professor Milner's** presentation focussed on making a case for a different MMP model than the one recommended by the Ont. CA. He begins with one of his main arguments in favour of MMP and that is that it is a system that one can explain easily which he feels is not true of STV. He doesn't argue that STV may not be a good choice to fit the political culture on BC; only that it is impossible to explain to an ordinary person how their vote gets translated into seats and therefore it can be a difficult sell if there is strong opposition mounted against it.

As far as MMP in Ont. goes, Milner believes that MMP with a province-wide list system is "dead in the water." He argues instead for MMP with regional lists based on the proposition that it is easy to defend against the charge that MMP gives too much power to the backrooms in Toronto. With regional lists, backrooms in Toronto cannot be a factor.

Milner presented a regional list MMP model for Canada pointing out that his model was quite similar to that of the Law Commission of Canada. Every riding is 150% bigger with one-third of the seats being elected on a regional basis. He argues that regions are where people live and identify with and with his model, proponents of reform can always say: yes, your region is well represented in this MMP model with both riding and regional list seats. It answers the major arguments of opponents to MMP and change.

While FPTP simply exaggerates the regional differences that exist and makes it very difficult for major parties to have any representation where they are weak, MMP, if you do it by regions, turns this around. All parties will have some representation in areas where they are weak and with regional lists, you get almost perfect proportionality with only 35% list seats by regions. This makes this a fundamentally saleable model which in Milner's opinion is so important.

He also feels that now is the time for electoral reformers to focus on the federal scene since no one can argue that the system is working well. We will continue to have minority parliaments split along regional lines. What we need to promote is a system that can give us a coalition that will work – in fact, a proportional system federally can deal with the reality of Canadian politics much better than any other model. In the current context, people want parties to be talking and cooperating but to get this to happen, people need to be aware that they need to change the electoral system.

Milner suggested that proponents of MMP should be ready to make some compromises – for example, on things like the size of regions or whether people can run in both a riding and on a list – but the important thing is to make compromises in order to get a reformed system in place.

The next presenter was **Stuart Parker** whose topic was BC-STV. Parker spent some time describing BC political culture to explain why STV makes sense as a voting system for that province. STV weakens the power of political parties and allows the populist voters of the province more voter choice in their multi-member ridings. He pointed out that voters in BC in the past have had experience voting in multi-member ridings at different levels of government so wouldn't find this aspect of STV difficult to deal with.

As opposed to the referendum in 2005, he did think that having a map showing the new ridings – 20 multi-member districts varying in size from 2 to 7 members -- will hurt the “yes” campaign as will both “yes” and “no” having \$500,000 to spend. In the last referendum, the “no” side spent very little money. In dealing with the question of appeal across the political spectrum, Parker did point out that STV does appeal more to the political right which responds positively to the rhetoric of more voter choice.

**In choosing an appropriate pr model for any jurisdiction be it Ontario or Canada, Parker suggested that there are some fundamental questions that need to be asked --**

- **what system is more consistent with the political culture, the political history and local tradition**
- **what system can be backed with rhetoric that will resonate with local voters**
- **what system will attract opinion leaders who will be convincing to local voters**
- **what kinds of opposition will your system conjure up – can you make them say unpopular things**
- **will the system appeal to people who will be voting on it**
- **do you have the ability to shape your opponents' campaign – this is very important**

**He ended his remarks but advising people to ask these questions and use the answers to design a system that will meet victory in a campaign.**

**Note: following the lunch break, participants went to one of three breakout groups:**

- **BC-STV Campaign – how Ontarians can help the BC campaign – this group was facilitated by Stuart Parker**
- **Reform Processes and Models – discussion continued from the morning sessions; the session was facilitated by Victoria Serda**
- **Engaging Youth – facilitated by Dave Meslin and Louisa Moya from Equal Voice**

Notes from these groups can be found in the appendices attached to this report.

## Afternoon Panel – How I Would Put Electoral Reform on Political Agenda

This panel was moderated by **Victoria Serda, Municipal Councillor from Port Elgin, former Green Party candidate, and climate change activist.** The three presenters were Bruce Cox, Executive Director of Greenpeace and former NDP campaign director; Jim Harris, former leader of the Green Party of Canada, and Andrew Coyne, National Editor, Maclean's and political commentator and each addressed the topic generating many useful ideas for Fair Vote to consider in redesigning its messaging and communications strategy to get its campaign on the political agenda.

**Bruce Cox** started his presentation by showing how Canadian politics can be “high-jacked” by the FPTP voting system. Before the last election, polls showed that 86% of Canadians favoured strong action on climate change and 62% voted for parties supporting cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and this 62% translated into just over 50% of the seats, yet because of FPTP we have a government representing only 38% of the voters and one that is ignoring the vast majority of Canadians who want action on climate change.

Addressing the question of putting electoral reform on the political agenda, Cox noted that since it's politicians who have to bring about this change, the fair vote campaign has to build support among the public to the point where there is enough pressure that the politicians feel it and know they have to act.

These are the components that Cox listed as necessary for a successful campaign:

1. **a clearly written plan** -- a road map showing resources and milestones along the way; this is key because it demonstrates a shared vision for supporters.
2. the campaign must be **more “sexy”, more hip**
3. **fair vote needs to engage more in emotional arguments** and make sure they are getting out; the issue is cerebral and it is necessary to have good facts to respond to challenges by opponents but **facts don't motivate people to action**
4. **fair vote needs to use more people in its communications** – “people are your communicators”; to build support, people need to see the faces of ordinary Canadians representing the diverse population of the country out there speaking up for fair voting; people need to see models of themselves in the campaign so they can identify with them
5. make the issue about people – not governments not responding to people
6. **remember to “stay out of the weeds”** – that is the details of pr; main campaign should be about the issue of fairness – do you stand for it or not; needs to be repeated again and again
7. **fundraising is key to success**; it takes a long time to build up support and you need money to build the campaign
8. **need opinion leaders who will come forward from all regions etc. to speak for your issue – need about 1000 people**; journalists with a podium; celebrities – musicians,

artists; ngos – need them to argue for fair voting since it will make their issue move faster; lastly, need politicians willing to speak for fairness

In closing, Cox suggests the fair vote campaign must paint a picture of a better society:

- inspire people with a vision of the kind of country we can have with fair voting
- use “hope” as a motivator.

**Jim Harris** began by pointing out that we already have movement on our issue in that we have had three referendums since 2004 and are facing a fourth. At some point, the grain of sand that causes the avalanche will be put on the sand-pile. The important thing for the fair vote campaign now is to concentrate on campaign building – one person at a time. He emphasized how important and effective this can be. Among his other points –

- the campaign strategy needs to empower people to build the campaign themselves and not use a top-down approach
- focus on the internet – this is where young people are
- shouldn't be afraid of “hard messaging”

**In closing, Harris agreed with Cox regarding the need to inject more emotion into the fair vote campaign suggesting we need to get people fired up so they will say “We're mad as hell about an electoral system that....”**

**Andrew Coyne** perhaps brought a more sober message to the group in terms of the potential of the fair vote campaign to achieve success but he had some interesting points to make about messaging.

He suggested that at the moment what is happening on the federal scene certainly provides strong grounds for discussing electoral reform. The fact is that FPTP is no longer delivering stable government – in fact, it is delivering instability. So, if the selling point for FPTP is that it delivers stable government, that is no longer a valid argument in Canada. It is FPTP that is delivering a pizza parliament because it's a system designed for a two-party system and we're using it in five-party elections. This plus the fact that voting turnout has declined to 59% are major arguments for change. In fact, the system is broken.

Referring to Ontario referendum, Coyne was critical of the media saying that no one did their homework and when they spoke about it, they invariably got it wrong, referring only to Israel and Italy, showing much ignorance about the topic. His main point was that it cannot be said that the people have spoken. “The people did not speak; they barely knew it was on.”

In terms of messaging, Coyne thinks the movement for change will “live or die in BC.” He worries that STV will be difficult to sell and suggests that it should be renamed the “1,2,3” system.

If the overall fair voting campaign is going to focus on “fairness”, it can’t be too abstract and it can’t be about parties because people don’t care about parties. It will have to be about “fairness for me.” Maybe we need to think about appealing to a coalition of victims based on a narrow collection of interests i.e. Liberals in the West, Conservatives in Toronto, federalists in Que., supporters of the Green and other smallish parties and lastly people who live in safe seats or regions where parties don’t even bother to campaign. If we can make these people mad, then maybe we’ll have the basis for a real campaign.

But Coyne also worried that fairness may not be enough. He referred to a pollster who said that people don’t care how politicians are elected but people really do care about what politicians do after the election. He suggested that the fair vote campaign needs to connect the case for electoral reform with people’s everyday complaints about how politics works and show how these discontents are a direct result of the voting system. Ask the question: what do you hate about politics....

As an example, he notes that we often have long periods of inaction on issues in our parliaments because parties and politicians won’t take chances, worrying that if the party goes down 2% in support, what will happen in an election. This means we’re all hostages to 2% of the electorate – the swing voters who are the least informed and make up their minds on election day.

For voters who have voted in election after election and never elected anyone, there be some appeal using the message: imagine if you could go to the polls and vote for the party you like and you know it exists and you will actually elect somebody. He doesn’t think you can sell voters in Canada on a new society; rather he suggests using an approach for reform based on the proposition that a proportional system will actually give you a system that you thought you had – that is, one person, and one vote that counts.

He closed his remarks by reminding people that after an election, the majority deserves to rule but everyone deserves representation. Elections aren’t just about finding out who wins, they need to be about finding out what people think.

**Larry Gordon** closed the forum by noting that we’re into a new era in our fair voting campaign following the last election in Oct., 2008 and the discussion about the coalition. There is now a whole new contingent of people who for the first time realize that the voting system matters and is the cause of many of the things that frustrate them about politics in Canada. So, having the forum was a timely way to begin the discussions of a new strategic direction for the fair vote campaign. Gordon went on to say, picking up on some of the talk in the previous panel, it’s not enough to be a believer, if the fair vote campaign is ever going to move forward, people need to join Fair Vote Canada, people

need to become monthly donors, people need to become leaders for the campaign in their local communities. Lastly, we have to win in BC and then we need people to come to our next big conference in Ottawa in June, 2009, to decide on the future directions for the fair vote campaign.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This report was written by Linda Sheppard, Chair, Fair Vote Ontario using both notes from various participants and the video record of the forum available on dvd.

## Appendices – Notes from Break-Out Groups

### 1. How to Assist the BC-STV Campaign – Stuart Parker

- best thing you can do is go there
- sponsor someone i.e. pay or airmiles
- Jim Harris spoke about virtual phone banks – used in Obama campaign – suggests could be used in BC
- re media in BC – G and M will be on yes side but not sure about CanWest Global and it controls all the dailies in BC
- Parker noted that there is some logic to where Ont. people could usefully campaign because there has been some significant emigration from Ont. to places like Nelson, Victoria, etc.
- re NDP and lack of support for STV – Parker summed up their position as: “We would rather be in opposition than cooperate with anyone.”
- the NDP continues to come up with messages that undermine STV – the perfect is the enemy of the good – MMP is more proportional etc. etc.; they promise voters that if they defeat STV, they’ll give you MMP and if you pass STV, we won’t; their only strategy that might possibly work is to make this intolerably embarrassing for Carole James so she changes her message – would have to be done in the media
- Gregor Robertson, advocate of STV municipally – currently person in BC NDP with most public clout in favour of BC-STV
- position of Green Party – whole-heartedly supporting BC-STV – different last time
- BC’ers not happy with politics in province – neither party is popular with electorate; good level of dissatisfaction in province which should help BC-STV campaign – don’t need a lot of detail in campaign, just to ask people if things could be worse
- position of BC Liberals – nothing to be done here
- best opportunity in terms of elites – get to Conservatives in Lib. caucus ---- through Can. Tax. Fed. or Nat. Citizens Coalition
- what should be said publicly about NDP, should be decided by campaign exec. as well as what strategy should be followed in campaign.
- re phoning, Parker will circulate information in near future

Linda Sheppard, Chair, FVO

### 2. Engaging Youth – Dave Meslin and Louisa Moya

There were approximately 30 people in the “Engaging Youth” workshop and the participants ranged in age from seventeen to mid-sixties with most people between the ages of 20 and 35.

- Importance of getting beyond myth of youth apathy, youth are often dismissed but we need to understand that youth often recognize the corruption they are facing and the seeming futility of their actions. However, there are also counter examples, ie. protests at the Seattle and Quebec summits, campus activity
- Dave gave the example of an event he organized called City Idol, which was designed to get more people involved in municipal elections. The event was aimed at youth but not explicitly. Dave mentioned the importance of framing (using language that is relatable, youth don't like to be called youth). The event consisted of individuals competing for the chance to run for office "American Idol-style). Each contestant gave a one-minute speech about city politics. There were 75 candidates who were diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Semi-finalists were selected to compete at the next level and then the winners were chosen. Winners were given help while running for city council. The event acted as a way of removing barriers to entrance into municipal politics, the same way that American Idol removes barriers to entrance into the music industry.
- Partisan politics are not appealing to many youths, issues trigger youth engagement
- Interest is there among youth but there needs to be a multi-partisan outlet, which is what makes electoral reform such a good issue to get youth involved in. The BC-STV campaign is a perfect opportunity because of the tendency among youth to flock to a potential victory.
- Need to select a clearly identifiable issue
- Events should be free and it is important not to mix outreach and fundraising
- Venue should be accessible by transit and well-known, more successful if it is in a club or bar (more relatable and exciting for youth)
- Catchy titles (ie. Where's an STV and Where Can I Get One?), keep the language fun and relatable
- Fun social events can be injected with politics, ie. Dave organized an event for the Toronto Public Space committee that had 3 minutes of talking about the issues between musical acts
- Timing is important (ie. not early on weekends)
- Same as any marketing, need to determine target audience and spin the truth to reflect
- In terms of media the use of Facebook is now essential, it has its limitations (Facebook does not equal reality) but it does yield solid results in terms of reaching people.
- Louisa gave the example of a coalition/network of youth-helping-youth organizations she was involved with, which worked towards the common goal of getting more youth out to vote in the federal election. The group had weekly conference calls and organized a youth vote day, which consisted of different events across the country; including press releases and media coverage. The organizations involved shared resources with one another and the events had coverage in major papers across Canada. The slogan for the event was "Voters are Hot." Louisa emphasizes the importance of catchy language/wording that will resonate with youth.
- Remember that you can't do it alone, need to find like-minded organizations (common allies)
- Press likes the idea of youth talking about "non-youth" issues, take advantage of that

- Possibility of outreach in high schools (civics)
- Patrick Boyer is involved with organization, Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, does talks in high school classes.  
“Test” Patrick Boyer administers to high school students:  
Question 1: Write down the issue that’s most important to you.  
Question 2: What do you want to see done about the issue identified in #1?  
Question 3: What organization or group do you see doing #2 about #1?  
He then tells students to do the following: If #3 exists, get involved with them. If #3 doesn’t exist, create it.
- Boyer also organized a multi-school event that resulted in the production of a documentary called “Does My Vote Count?”
- Conveying message that politics should be about taking action about issues that matter.
- Emphasize the need for discussion, not what people should think
- Change the system on a smaller scale (ie. student councils), helps to eliminate fear of change
- Connection between educators and student movement, possibility of students approaching unions re: curriculum reform. Progressive school trustees could also be approached.
- Movement to encourage more all-candidates meetings in high schools, gets more young people involved
- Diversity of youth: engage by profession, interests, etc.
- Need to establish definite goals, action plans (timeline), resources
- Can’t shove a message down the throats of youth, you have to make it fun. Also a way of reaching parents because their kids will talk about what they’ve learned.
- Need to find the sexy side of the issue
- Young people resent the idea of being voiceless/shut out, we can capitalize on this
- Emphasize the need for youth to educate other youth, as well as older people
- High school students have to complete community service hours, possibility of them doing so through Fair Vote
- Question raised as to whether there needs to be a “Rosa Parks” moment in the Fair Vote campaign – if so, might it come from younger supporter
- one participant spoke about grassroots backyard organizing in Obama campaign and suggested it might be that we need in our campaign – invite people to a party and then make it clear that there was going to talk about politics.

Sarah Lambert, Executive Member, Toronto Chapter, Fair Vote Canada

### **3. Processes and Models – Victoria Serda**

This group had the benefit of hearing from Patrick Heenan, a Citizens' Assembly member from Mississauga who was originally from North-western Ontario, one of the four CA members at the forum. He answered questions.

On "saleability" he said the CA members had asked a lot about that right from the beginning. They were told, he said, that there would be ample education funding, so they should not worry about saleability.

Jonathan Rose added that CA members were looking for proportionality, geographic representation, and simplicity. But they also had to weigh saleability, and CA members did discuss that.

Patrick Heenan was asked about regional lists, and the fear in the North that they would lose a seat with no guarantee of getting their share (four) of the list seats. He said many rural CA members had wanted regional lists, while many Toronto or GTA members did not. Province-wide lists would be more transparent as to gender and cultural minorities. Even regional MPPs could still come from the regional urban centre and not the rural areas. The Ontario legislature's small size was a problem: it was hard to have enough list MPPs for regional lists without making the House too large.

Asked about the near-winner model, Heenan said they had discussed it. But critics would have complained either about "party hacks on lists" or about "electing losers," so the choice was six of one, half a dozen of the other.

Henry Milner answered questions. On "flexible lists" he said they worked in pure list models and would be just as workable in an MMP model. He noted only 30% of Swedish voters used the optional personal vote. In Sweden, it has resulted in a few women moving up the list.

Would there be a proliferation of parties? Milner noted the advantage of a regional model: the natural threshold. But if people were worried about the risk of small regional parties, we could have a province-wide threshold of 4% or 5%.

Milner noted that this was the time to push federally, when FPTP now produces minority parliaments as the default position. A coalition government started to become possible. In this context, it's easy to make the argument that proportional systems work better than minority FPTP governments. Let's have an electoral system that fosters co-operation, not discourages it. These arguments now have traction, and we have to take advantage.

In answer to a question whether regional MPP would give fair results in smaller or rural regions, Milner directed Wilf Day to answer. Day pointed to the simulation handout showing that, in the ten-seat central Quebec region of Estrie-Centre-du-Quebec-Mauricie, even the NDP had enough votes for one regional MP, and the same was true of both the NDP and Greens in the 12-seat Southern Alberta region.

Wilf Day noted the effect of regional MMP on the Liberal Party's MPs. Instead of having only seven western MPs, Liberal voters would have elected 16, nine more. But this was even more true in Ontario outside the GTA where they elected only five MPs, and would have elected 15, ten more. On the other hand, they would have elected seven fewer from the City of Toronto. The Liberal establishment and the Toronto Star are apparently more concerned with keeping those seven Toronto MPs than getting nineteen from the rest of Ontario and the West.

On the question "could we set up our own unofficial CA federally?" Jonathan Rose noted it would cost \$10 million dollars for a project lacking legitimacy.

Finally, the question was raised "when will the drop in voter turnout be seen as a crisis of legitimacy? Are we there yet?" This remains an open question.

Wilf Day, Fair Vote Ontario Council

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