

SCOTT SIMMS
COAST OF BAYS-CENTRAL-
NOTRE DAME

TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

NOM DU (DE LA) SCOTT SIMMS
COAST OF BAYS-CENTRAL-
NOTRE DAME

RAPPORT SUR LES CONSULTATIONS
PUBLIQUES SUR LA RÉFORME
ÉLECTORALE

CONSULTATION(S)			
Date(s) of the Meeting(s)	Time and Length (start time and end time)	Location of Consultation	Total Number of People in Attendance (you may indicate the number of volunteers and employees who assisted with the meeting)
1. September 14, 2016	7:00-9:00 pm	Royal Canadian Legion Grand Falls-Windsor	16 which included 3 staff members
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP's office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Replacement of the current voting system: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Voter turnout: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility and inclusiveness: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory voting: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online voting: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local representation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify and describe below) <input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
What did participants say about the current system for electing Members of Parliament (benefits/flaws)? Did participants feel that their votes are fairly translated? (suggested limit: 500 words)
See attached.
Which alternatives to the current system were discussed? Did participants identify specific features that are important to them in an electoral system (for example local representation, proportionality, simplicity, legitimacy etc.)? (suggested limit: 500 words)
See attached.
Did participants discuss why they feel many Canadians choose not to engage in the

democratic process? Did they suggest ways to encourage participation? (suggested limit: 500 words)	
See attached	
Did participants feel that it should be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a ballot.) (suggested limit: 500 words)	
See attached	
Did participants discuss online voting? Did they express a desire to maintain current voting practices? (i.e. presenting themselves at a polling station, vote secrecy etc.) (suggested limit: 500 words)	
See attached	
Were any other major topics raised by the participants? (i.e. referendum, women/minority representation, accessibility, voter turnout etc.) (suggested limit: 500 words)	
All topics that were discussed are included in the attached five questions which were taped and recorded.	
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS (suggested limit: 1000 words)	
Recommendations:	
To encourage our youth to vote, it was recommended that there should be a course on elections and the importance of voting included in the high school curriculum.	
On-line voting was discussed in detail; however, it was felt that the level of security is not there yet for voting on-line.	
Encourage youth to vote by providing incentives for them to vote, ie. decrease in their student loan debt, decrease in income taxes they pay.	
If the status quo is no longer an alternative, then the preferential ballot would be the best choice.	
Mandatory voting was a definite no.	
Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)	Date:
MP's signature:	(Name)

Reports must be submitted to the Clerks of the Committee no later than Friday, October 14, 2016 in both official languages.

Please note that this document is for illustrative purposes only and can be modified or adapted to your needs. The report will be published on the Committee's web site.

. Please return to:

Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)
 131, rue Queen Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
 Tel./tél.: 613-992-3150 Fax/télécoeur: 613-947-3089 ERRE@parl.gc.ca

Royal Canadian Legion, Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Thursday, September 14, 2016

Before the questions were discussed, MP Scott went over the voting systems presented in the Library of Parliament power point presentation. All participants were provided with a copy of the presentation before the session began. There was good discussion on the different types of systems proposed. However, participants felt that more time would be required to review the information presented here this evening. The following are participant comments to the five questions discussed.

Question # 1 – What do you think about the current system for electing Members of Parliament (benefits/flaws)? Do you feel that votes are fairly translated?

- No contact was made with Canadians to get their opinions on whether or not they agreed to change or want to do away with the present voting system, FPTP.
- Nothing said here tonight to change his mind on FPTP.
- MP Scott asked what the participant thought about the multi-member voting in urban areas and rural areas of staying with one candidate to be elected. He said that FPTP is the best voting system for our representation at the district level.
- Another participant felt that FPTP artificially increases majorities which means certain people are disenfranchised; however it does promote stability. You have people across the country who say that they are not going to win here, I'm not voting because "so and so" is going to win, and I'm not going to vote for the candidate of my choice. You have fewer political parties who do not have a chance, so there are few options for voters.
- MP Scott put the question to the group: "Would you move to a mixed-member, multi-member system or would you prefer the preferential ballot voting system, one MP per riding who has to get 50% of the vote?" In the single transferrable vote, mixed member proportion presentation and single non-transferrable vote, the voting is very easy and there is no confusion at the ballot box; however, the counting of ballots is hard to understand.
- The preferential ballot would be the easiest and fairest transition to make to electoral reform.
- Preferential ballot is simple, 1st choice, 2nd choice and 3rd choice, etc.
- Unanimous decision was that if no status quo, then the preferential ballot would be their choice.
- One person asked how would the decision on how we vote be made? Mr. Simms said the standing committee has to make a presentation to Cabinet by December 1st. Our report has to be in on October 14th. Cabinet will introduce a bill for law in the spring of 2017. On-line submissions will also be part of the discussion.

Question #2 – Do you have a preferred alternative to the current system? What specific features are important to you in an electoral system (for example local representation, proportionality, simplicity, legitimacy, etc?)

- The preferred system for us is that we have local representation.
- Proportionality, it's very important for you that if 30% of Canadians choose a party, they get 30 % of the seats in the House of Commons.
- One person added that if asking a hard proportionality, his answer would be no, but if you're asking elements of proportionality, yes. Sure 30% of the house is represented by a party, however, don't sacrifice my local representation.
- Simplicity/legitimacy – Ease of voting. None of the systems are that difficult to comprehend as far as voting is concerned.

Question #3 – Why do you think many Canadians choose not to engage in the democratic process? How would you encourage participation?

- There are not many people here tonight, so that's one thing to look at.
- They don't care until decisions are made, then they complain about it.
- How would you encourage participation?
- In politics, you're either engaged or not, don't know how you can make people get engaged. It has to be something inside you if you're into it or not, such as civic responsibilities, etc.
- Looking around the room, there is quite an age gap.
- Most people my age are consumed with mortgage, work, and children. What the government does to pension plans, economic policy or other areas doesn't register with people my age, not until 30 years down the road.
- Education is the key to this problem.
- People's choices for representation are limited because of the number of parties.
- One member suggested that an excellent way to encourage participation would be to increase the legitimacy of politicians by taking away the suggestion they are solely motivated.

-John Chretien put in a Liberal subsidy where if you get so many votes, you get back money based on that number. The subsidy was done away with as well as corporation donation limitations. This should be reinstated. Fundraising will always be part of politics; however, the rules are now extreme.

-Because of their own pressing issues, people don't want to be involved.

-Discussion took place on lowering the age to vote to 16. Young people can now vote at 14 in a nomination. Not all participants thought this was a good idea.

-Politicians should go to schools to talk to high school students.

-One person brought up his experience of having an elected 16 year old on their Town Council. She was a non-voting member. All were impressed with her work and the level of her maturing and intelligence.

-A concern was raised that youth are not involved in elections and that our most reliable voting block is our seniors.

-Need incentives to engage our youth in elections, and one suggestion was to create incentives to vote, ie, a national lottery.

-Should be part of the school curriculum.

Question #4 -Do you feel that it should be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a ballot.)

-The unanimous answer to this question was an emphatic "No".

-It was felt that of all the changes to the system, this could be the most expensive, with special ballot delivery for voters who live in remote areas outside of their riding.

Question #5 -Should Canadians be able to vote online? Would you prefer to maintain current voting practices? (i.e. presenting oneself at a polling station, vote secrecy etc.)

-Everything is on-line now, so why can't we vote on-line. We pay our bills, do our banking, we order things, etc.

-In order to vote on-line, the system would have to be close to perfect. Right now the margin of error on on-line banking, purchase, etc. is 5-10%. We can't do that with voting.

-Hacking is also a major concern with on-line voting.

-Elections Canada wants the process to be near perfect for on-line voting.

-There is no intimidation when you go to a ballot box, but it could exist with on-line voting.

-One person said she would not take any risk with on-line voting, could be a catastrophe.

-One member felt that we have the technology and ability to go back to verify the vote, but another member felt that the technology is not there to go back and contact large number of voters, ie 5,000, to verify their vote.

-It was determined that there is a lot of work needs to be done before on-line voting comes to fruition.

Thank you and closing remarks were done by MP Scott Simms. He told participants that Minister Monsef will be in Gander at the Albatross on Thursday, September 29th, 7:00-9:00 pm.

All participants felt that this session was a good exercise, but getting people engaged with no election pending for three years, will be a monumental task.