

# Towards a Collaborative Politics



A brief for the ERRE  
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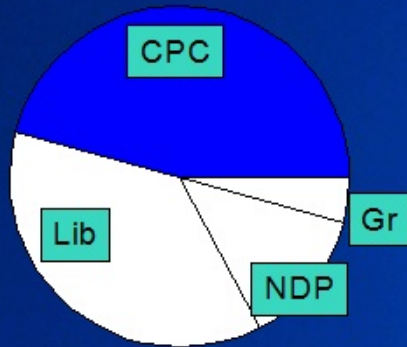
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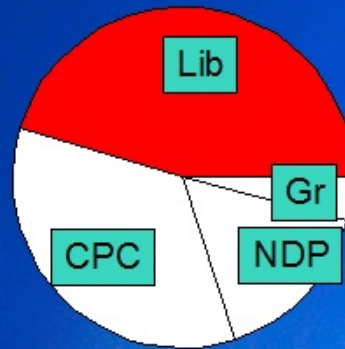
October 4, 2016

# Five Fraser Valley Ridings

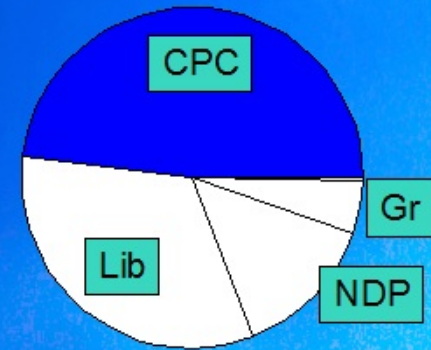
2015 Election Data



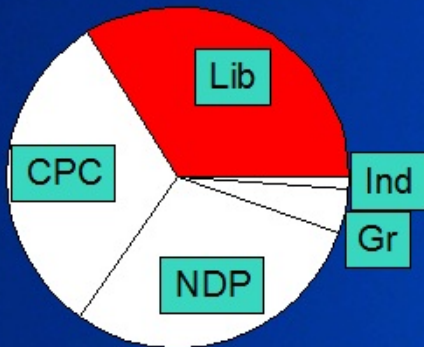
Fort Langley - Aldergrove 54% NA



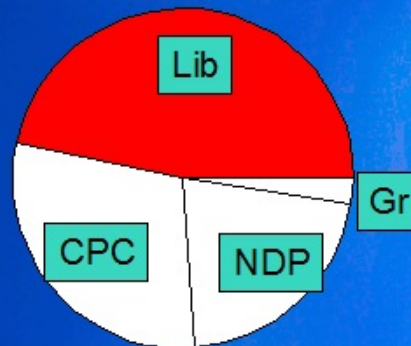
Langley - Cloverdale 54% NA



Abbotsford 52% NA



Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge 66% NA



Fleetwood-Port Kells 53% NA

On average:  
55.8% NA  
44.2% Active  
(NA=Not Active)

## 1. The Multi Member District - *An essential element in the voting system*

The preceding image refers to a group of five ridings in the central Fraser Valley, one being mine (Fort Langley - Aldergrove). All data used to create the charts comes from the 2015 election results, as taken from the Elections Canada website (Appendix 1)

From these charts it is easily seen that FPTP tries in each case to represent each riding by only one political viewpoint. The failure is obvious. 55.8% of voters are not represented, and 44.2% gained a representative

To understand what would happen, I amalgamated the five ridings into a single five member district, used the standard formula (Appendix 1) to establish the threshold, summed the votes of each party and checked the results. You can see the results on the next page.

There are two aspects to note:

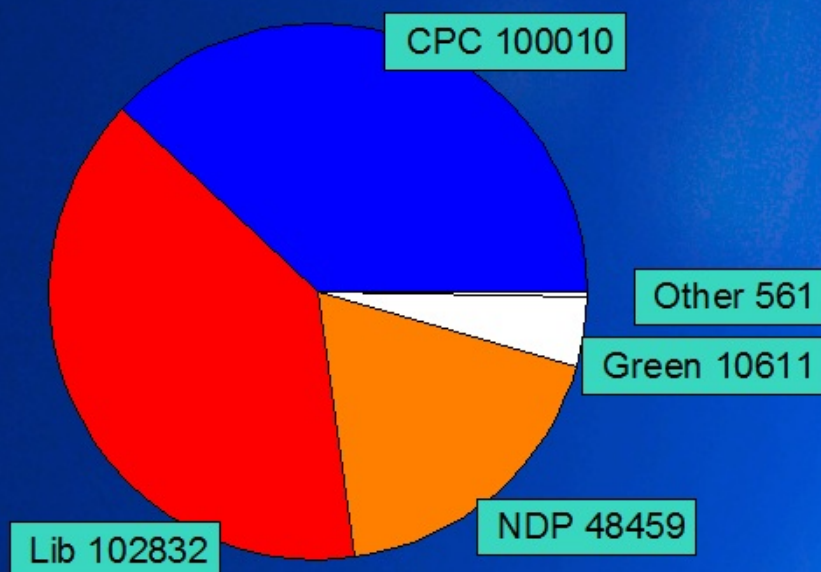
- The number of votes that become effective has more than doubled!
- The result is much more proportional. Over representation of the Liberal Party has abated, and representation of the NDP has emerged from the shadows.

It should be recognized that *disproportion has not been created* and consequently, no compensating mechanism is needed to correct for it.

The improvements shown here result from the use of the multi-member district only. No vote transfers have been made. Generally, in STV systems, 60 - 75% of voter's intentions are satisfied on first preferences, before transfers. In STV, the multi-member district provides the foundation for proportion. The preferential ballot adds proportionality by giving choices to the voters

# Form an STV 5 Member District

From the 5 FPTP ridings  
First Preferences only (Before any vote transfers)



Threshold for election  
43746 votes

2 CPC elected  
2 Liberals elected  
1 NDP elected

96% Active; have elected an MP

## 2. Classes of Voting Systems

There are three classes of voting systems; Majoritarian, Proportional and Representational:

Majoritarian systems include FPTP and AV. These systems are not proportional, waste votes and do not properly represent constituents

Proportional systems include List Systems and MMP. These systems are fairly strictly proportional, and less focused on representation. There is a trade off between proportion and representation

Representational systems include STV and Rural Urban PR and their variants. These systems use the multiple member district as a basic component, thus avoiding the disproportion evident in other schemes. Representational systems do not trade off representation in order to achieve proportion. These systems improve representation and proportion at the same time.

The fundamental issue is representation. The representative must have the ability and will to represent the constituent, and must have the power to act. A definition of representation does not include proportion, because if the system is equally representative for all voters, then it is proportional by nature. Discussions of proportion then, become a diversion. Representation implies proportion but proportion does not necessarily result in accurate representation. The two are not reciprocal.

Disproportion is easy to identify, easy to explain and provides immediate recognition. Good representation however, is less tangible, and it takes effort to make the case for it. Next I want to show how that essential element, the ballot, supports or fails to support representation

### 3. How Ballot Design Effects System Function

The ballot paper is the the information gathering stage in the electoral system. The trick is to get as much information from the voter as possible without creating barriers to their participation

#### First Past the Post Ballot

|                         |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Mark your choice with X |  |   |
| John Winter             |  |   |
| Martha Spring           |  |   |
| Will Autumn             |  | X |
| Anne Summer             |  |   |
|                         |  |   |

- One choice only. In a safe seat riding, is this a real choice?
- Not proportional
- Single winner
- Simple to vote, but sacrifices 50-60% of the votes
- A safe seat is a disincentive for an MP to represent constituents fully

#### Alternative Vote Ballot

|                               |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Rank your choice 1, 2, 3, etc |  |   |
| John Winter                   |  | 3 |
| Martha Spring                 |  | 1 |
| Will Autumn                   |  |   |
| Anne Summer                   |  | 2 |
|                               |  |   |

- Voter may rank choices. Choice is improved
- Not proportional
- Single winner
- Simple to vote, but sacrifices 50% of the votes
- Second preferences may advantage a centrist party
- A safe seat is a disincentive for an MP to represent constituents fully

## Mixed Member Proportional Ballot

| Constituency Candidate<br>Mark your choice with X |  |   | Party List Candidate<br>Mark your choice with X |  |              |
|---|--|---|---|--|--------------|
| John Winter                                       |  |   |   |  | Conservative |
| Martha Spring                                     |  |   |   |  | Liberal      |
| Will Autumn                                       |  | X | X   |  | NDP          |
| Anne Summer                                       |  |   |   |  | Green        |
|   |  |   |   |  |              |

- The voter gets two choices; one for a Constituency candidate, and one for a Party. This system is a hybrid of FPTP and a List system, each functioning differently and setting up different influences for political parties and voters
- The system is focused on proportion
- MMP admits new parties to the mix; up to about 18. A threshold is usually established to filter out the smaller ones
- Political parties tend to have control over the composition of the Party List and Constituency nominations.
- There is a trade off between proportionality and local representation



Single Transferable Vote Ballot - Five member district

| <b>Rank your choices; 1, 2, 3 etc, for as many candidates as you desire</b> |     |          |
|---|-----|----------|
| John Winter   |     |          |
| Martha Spring   |     |          |
| Will Autumn   |     | <b>1</b> |
| Anne Summer   |     |          |
| James Smith   |     | <b>4</b> |
| Marion Garner   |     |          |
| Allan Harder  |     | <b>2</b> |
| Muriel Brown  |     |          |
| Keith Black   | Ind |          |
| Lisa Bromley  |     |          |
| Guy Forks   | Ind | <b>3</b> |
|   |     |          |
|   |     |          |

- Voters have a wide range of choices, even more than one choice within each party. These choices are enhanced by the ability to rank candidates allowing various strategies to be employed. A voter may vote along party lines, or gender lines.
- There is more competition for the seats, even between candidates of the same party. This encourages MP's to actively represent their constituents
- STV is voter oriented, not party oriented
- There is no trade off between proportionality and local representation.
- Ballot is simple to complete. Mark your choices: 1, 2, 3 etc

#### **4. STV and Equality - *MP's are equal, voters are equal***

All MP's are elected under the same rules, and must meet approximately the same threshold for election. Each MP must win a personal mandate from the voters, and is responsible directly to them. Voters are also treated equally. Each vote carries nearly the same weight and power to elect. There is no incentive to vote strategically.

There are no safe seats under STV, so each candidate faces the same competition for election

#### **5. STV and Choices - *Choices for voters, choices for MP's***

At election time, each candidate competes in a field of candidates who may include candidates from his or her own party. In our Fraser Valley example above, the Conservative and Liberal Parties, expecting to be able to elect two MP's each will probably run three candidates each. Perhaps the NDP may choose to run two. There could be ten candidates on the ballot. A voter may choose to vote along party lines, gender lines or any other kind of strategy. The range of choice is very large

A candidate has the freedom to focus on a segment of the voters, rather than all voters, if her party has specific philosophical or political views. Elected members have greater ability to represent their constituents with less party discipline. Where there is an issue that affects all parties, the MP's in the district can collaborate, and come up with a joint strategy to deal with the issue

#### **6. STV is Simplicity Exemplified**

STV is simple for voters. It is easy to vote; 1, 2, 3 etc. The system of transfers is somewhat complicated because it must process a lot of voter input. All of this is out of sight of the user, and calculated by the computer. STV voting results are easily verified by a user with a PC, a list of the voting results and an algorithm

STV is simple for the committee to design in draft form. About 85 districts. Initially these can be obtained by amalgamating FPTP ridings. STV is simple for Elections Canada to design. Parliament is dictating a short lead time for this and the committee must deliver a clear, concise direction to the cabinet. Make this easy for them! Larger districts are less susceptible to Gerrymandering.

## **7. STV Limits Extremism**

STV admits a wide range of political viewpoints into parliament, but limits extreme elements. Extreme parties, while garnering a quantity of first preferences, gather few second preferences and have difficulty electing members. The Irish republic has seen no large success by far right wing parties

## **8. STV; Women and Minorities**

STV removes the systemic obstacles to women and minorities. Different kinds of constituencies can be formed within the district like business interest, or environment. A party can run a candidate who represents a particular interest well. There is no need to find a single candidate to represent every possible political view.

## **9. STV and Consensus in Parliament**

STV will result in more coalitions among parties and less reversals in public policy. Policies are developed incrementally, are more stable, and better reflect the will of the people

## **10. STV and the North**

Many feel that STV does not service sparsely populated areas well since the districts are very large. Modifying these northerly districts to make them smaller may affect the value of representation. Care will need to be taken to ensure that we do not re-create the problems experienced with FPTP systems. Northerners may prefer the better representation afforded in the multi member district

The committee may consider consulting the northern areas separately to find out what their needs and values are. Is it proper for those of us in the southern, more populated areas, to dictate to the north how this should be done? Perhaps a Citizens Assembly should be arranged for the Northern peoples. Many of the people of the North are indigenous and function under a different set of cultural and political norms. They should be accorded special consideration in these deliberations

**Appendix 1 - Elections Canada data used in figures 1 and 2**

| <b>Riding</b>                         | <b>CPC</b> | <b>Lib</b> | <b>NDP</b> | <b>Green</b> | <b>Other</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>A%</b> | <b>NA%</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Langley - Aldergrove                  | 27333      | 21894      | 7490       | 2644         |              | 59361        | 46        | 54         |
| Langley City - Cloverdale             | 18800      | 24617      | 8463       | 2195         |              | 54075        | 45.5      | 54.5       |
| Abbotsford                            | 23229      | 15777      | 6593       | 2416         | 109          | 48124        | 48.3      | 51.7       |
| Pitt Meadows - Maple Ridge            | 16373      | 17673      | 15450      | 2202         | 452          | 52150        | 33.9      | 66.1       |
| Fleetwood - Port Kells                | 14275      | 22871      | 10463      | 1154         |              | 48763        | 46.9      | 53.1       |
|                                       |            |            |            |              |              |              |           |            |
| <b>District (sum of riding votes)</b> | 100010     | 102832     | 48459      | 10611        | 561          | 262473       | 95.7      | 4.3        |
| <b>MP's Elected</b>                   | 2          | 2          | 1          |              |              |              |           |            |

The threshold for election in the STV district is calculated thus:

A%: Active votes  
 NA%: Not Active votes

$$\text{Threshold} = \frac{\text{Number of voters}}{\text{Number of MP's} + 1} + 1$$

$$\text{Threshold} = \frac{262473}{5 + 1} + 1$$

$$\text{Threshold} = 43747$$

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All data from Elections Canada - Election 2015

## Appendix 2. STV and the Mandate of the Committee

STV Satisfies the Principles Outlined in the Mandate for the Committee:

1. **Effectiveness and Legitimacy** - Canadians may be confident that their democratic will, as expressed by their votes will be fairly translated, to the extent that 60-70% of their first preference votes, and 70-95% when second preferences are counted. Distortion is reduced naturally in this system. The link between voter and MP is direct and less influenced by party affiliation
2. **Engagement** - The direct connection of the voter to the MP, and the satisfaction of seeing an MP that you have helped to elect encourages participation, including those voters who are poorly represented currently. STV naturally limits extreme viewpoints. Extreme parties may gain first preference votes, but are less successful in securing second preferences. The republic of Ireland, using STV has not seen the election of an extreme party in 100 years
3. **Accessibility and Inclusiveness** - STV is simple. There is one vote. The voter simply ranks their choices 1, 2, 3, etc, ranking as many choices as desired. Moreover, the voter has a very high success rate in seeing those choices realized.
4. **Integrity** - STV has a track record of moderate government in Ireland for 100 years. It's results can be verified by algorithms easily written and operated on a personal computer. It is not rocket science. All math is simple arithmetic.
5. **Local Representation** - By offering voters a wide range of choice, and success in electing representatives, STV establishes greater accountability of MP's to their constituents. The team of MP's bring the best awareness of local conditions and needs to the national debate. The MP team offers voters choice in who to contact to facilitate resolution of his or her issues, not just one MP, who may not be sympathetic to the matter raised, and may even have an opposing view.