

Much of the problems in Canada are systemic. Our government is designed to just get bigger. There are no checks or motivation to reduce the size of government or to make it operate more efficiently. Big government makes corruption, commodification of citizens and control of people much easier to accomplish.

To combat these forces, our parliamentary system should be reconfigured to make it more accountable to the people rather than just having the veneer of democracy.

Electoral reform should have three main components to increase the accountability of our system:

1. Elected Senate. Seeing how the Senate currently operates, it is easy to be cynical and say that the Senate is useless and should be abolished completely. The Senate as it stands should be abolished, but for the sake of democracy it must be reformed and given actual power to govern.
2. Elected Governor General. Having our Head of State appointed by the Prime Minister (PM), is utter folly.
3. Elected PM. Our current system in which the leader of the political party that wins the most ridings and becomes the de facto PM is a testament to the weakness of the party system in our parliamentary democracy.

In this proposal the strength of parties will become weaker as self-serving entities and stronger as servants for the people.

Elected Senate:

Senators should be elected in ridings that are representative of the Canadian people. Our current 105 Senators that are all appointed by the PM is the antithesis of democracy. Senators should be elected in fixed date elections every four years. One Senator should be elected in areas of 3-4 ridings. Every elected Senator would represent 300,000 - 400,000 people, based on the typical riding size in Ontario.

Every senator riding would be called a "District" in order to differentiate it from a riding. Senator candidates would be supported by "district associations" to support the senator candidates. Invariably, the establishment parties would become involved with the Senate, but the party pressure should naturally be lower on the Senate as it cannot fold by a vote of non-confidence.

Implementing this will not require a major change in the structure of the Senate or how Elections Canada (EC) operates elections.

Elected Governor General:

The Canadian Head of State is officially the Queen and represented by the Governor General, (GG) is not manifested in reality. The Governor General is a symbolic position that only has perceived power, but is completely controlled by the PM. The elected Governor General would sit at the head of the Senate chamber with the speaker of the chamber sitting in front of them. The speaker of the Chamber would be elected by the Senators from one of the elected Senators.

The election for the GG would be at the same time as the elections for Senator. Every citizen of Canada would be able to vote for the GG. Senators would win their seat by winning the most votes in their District and the GG would be the individual who obtains the most votes across Canada. Senators and the GG would be likely members of a political party, but they could also be independents. The same EC rules would apply for parliamentary/PM and for Senate/GG elections.

The elected GG would not be accountable to the Queen, but to the voters of Canada and would be the Head of State.

Elected Prime Minister:

Currently, the Speaker sits at the head of the Parliamentary Chamber, but with an elected PM. The PM would both sit at the head of the Chamber and the Speaker would sit in front of the PM. It is anti-democratic that the leader of the party that wins the most seats becomes the PM. In our current antagonistic system, it is no wonder that minority governments are failing due to non-confidence votes, which is a failure of our democracy every time this happens.

The proposed amendments will make it impossible for a government to fall on a vote of non-confidence. Since a government cannot fall on a non-confidence motion there will be less of a motivation for MP's that dissent from their party to vote against their conscience or constituents. This will naturally weaken the grip that a party holds on its MPs and they would be more likely to represent their constituents rather than their party.

The cabinet would still be comprised of MPs whose party won the most seats and the leader of that party would choose the cabinet that would primarily serve the people rather than the PM, since the PM could be from a different political party. A PM candidate could not be one of the current leaders of a political party. As the leaders of the political parties will still need to win their seat in a riding. If a leader of a party wanted to become PM, then they could not simultaneously run in a riding and run as PM, they could only be candidates for one position.

The PM's seat will be won by winning the most votes across Canada. Every citizen would have a ballot for PM. Invariably, the major political parties would field a candidate. Of course independents could also run as candidates for PM, but it would practically impossible. Every PM candidate would need to get 50 signatures from people in every riding across Canada. That

would be a minimum of 16,900 signatures. In other words the EC rules would not need to be changed, and the same election process would be used to elect a PM.

The PM will get to vote on motions in Parliament, just like any other MP. The PM would be considered the Head of Government.

The Canadian Prime Minister has far too much power and we see how that can lead to tyranny.

How about the leader of the party that wins the most seats:

With the proposed changes, the leader of the party winning the most ridings in an election would become the Parliamentary House Leader or the Senate House Leader.

Some scenarios to illustrate the improvements of this system:

Currently, in a vote of non-confidence parliament is dissolved and an election is called. In the above system where the PM is elected separate from parliamentarians, if a government motion fails, it then goes to the Senate to be voted on. The Senate can amend the failed motion and then vote on it. If it passes it becomes Law. If the vote fails in the Senate, it must go back to the Parliament where the PM will then decide what to do with the motion. In these circumstances the PM will have authority to pass the motion, as is or have it fail. The PM will not have the authority to make changes to the motion.

In the event a motion is failed by the PM after being voted on by Parliament and Senate, then the ruling party must reintroduce an amended motion.

There will never be an election called due to a non-confidence vote. Elections for Parliament and PM will be fixed at a four-year interval and elections for GG and Senate will also be fixed at four-year intervals. In other words, there would be fixed elections every two years in Canada alternating between Senate and Parliament.

The election laws will not need to change and a major overhaul of the two houses will not be necessary. The improvement to our democracy will be substantial, without requiring a major dismantling of our institutions. It will keep what is good and improve on what needs improving.

Who tables the Budget?

The party that wins the most seats in the election becomes the ruling party. The party leader will choose the cabinet and will be responsible for the budget and tabling motions. This would not be a change of how currently our government operates.

Could Senators introduce Bills?

Yes. Bills introduced in the Senate would need to be passed in the Senate first and then pass in parliament and then signed by the GG before becoming Law.

If a vote passes in Parliament but fails in the Senate

In the event a motion passes in parliament but fails in the Senate, then the motion fails. For a Bill to become law it must pass in parliament and the Senate.

A bill that passes in the parliament and the Senate requires the approval of the elected GG to become law. The GG should have veto power over bills presented to them. If they did not have veto powers they could theoretically choose not to sign an unjust bill into law, which would effectively be the same as having veto power.

Who would represent Canada internationally the PM or GG?

An elected Prime Minister and Governor General would have authority from the people of Canada. The GG would represent Canada and the PM would represent the Canadian government. The PM would, as head of government, speak for the people of Canada overseas and would have executive power of the military.

The elected GG would have many of the same responsibilities of the current GG, but also would have an expanded role as Head of the Senate.

The proposed system uses all of our existing institutions, but extends power to the people instead of having the PM appoint the GG and Senators. Having fixed election dates makes it easier for EC to prepare for elections. Implementing these changes would require an amendment to the Constitution or would be passed as an electoral reform bill.

I believe our government system is flawed, and many of my supporters in Niagara Falls were also looking for a policy on electoral reform in the platform. This is just my idea, but there could be better ways to phrase and structure electoral reform, but it is necessary.