

Presentation to the  
**Select Committee on the Election Act**  
of the National Assembly of Québec

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by  
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This presentation emphasizes the need for a truly democratic system of government, to be accomplished by proportional representation in the most exact way of the terms. Democracy is defined as government by the people, where the majority decides. The thus elected government is then judged by the way it accommodates the needs of its Minorities.

1. Elections should be held on **fixed dates every four years** to avoid influencing the outcome. Under the current system a newly elected government can (and generally will) introduce unpopular legislation in the early days of their mandate and then buy their way out of the resulting negative popular opinion by lavishly spending taxpayers money on glory projects. Elections should be held in the Spring or Fall, preferably on a Sunday.
2. Provincial and Federal **elections should be staggered** so that there is a two year overlap between government changes. This will improve continuity.
3. It would be advisable for political parties to elect their leaders and prime candidates at the **halfway point** between elections so that the electorate can get used to the candidates and their abilities.
4. When the start of the election process is formally announced, all political parties table the complete **list of all their candidates** in the sequence of their importance. The list would be very specific as to the qualifications of the candidate to perform the function he/she would be elected to perform. Candidates will be elected on the basis of the number of votes the party receives.
5. At the same time as publishing the list of candidates, the party issues a preliminary **statement as to its proposed platform**. One week prior to the election the proposed platform will be up-dated and re-published. This will be clear, precise and in **plain French and English**, avoiding elaborate legal sentences/terms etc. with weasel clauses/words.
6. Eligible voters will **vote for the entire party slate** of their choice. For each 40,000 votes (number to be calculated by dividing the total number of eligible voters by the number of seats in the National Assembly) received by a party, one member is elected from the top of the list.
7. The candidate on the **top of the list will be the future Premier**, while the next listed candidates will fill the cabinet posts. The remainder will be relegated to the backbenches. In this fashion the electorate gets to **select the entire government**. It would be to the political party's advantage to assign the sequence as early as possible since the election of the party may depend not only on the choice for Premier but also for his team.
8. When voting for a party slate it is up to the political party to make sure that their team represents a **wide selection of Minorities** of all types.
9. **Minorities** can be Cultural, Ethnic, Religious, Handicapped etc. In the same manner the political parties will have to accommodate the needs of **rural vs. urban** voters.

10. When voting for the party slate **riding size and location** are not important and would only be maintained to administer the election process. Therefore ridings would be best divided by natural or geographical borders.
11. Once the new government is in power, it has the full four year term to fulfill its promises. Only plain salaries will be paid to them. Neither they nor their deputies will receive any bonuses or pensions until the end of their term. At that time they will be held **accountable**. This is done by reducing any approved bonuses or future pensions in an equal percentage as the unfulfilled promises.
12. Legislation should be enacted to limit the use of "**voting the party line**". This is a highly un-democratic way for the Premier to control the vote in parliament. It should be allowed only on very special, well divined occasions. Political parties should devise another way to keep unity amongst their members. That is what caucus meetings are supposed to do.
13. To enhance **voter participation** a system of incentives should be devised, such as tax breaks for voters. In countries like Australia it is compulsory to vote. Rather than penalize non-voters it is believed that an incentive would accomplish far more.
14. With the growth of the computer technology it will very soon be possible to not only conduct the **voting process electronically**, but do so from the home of the voters through telephone lines. Every home now-a-days has a phone and thus voter participation could be significantly improved.
15. Home voting would also allow the government to easily and rapidly conduct **mini-referendums** on special issues of significance to all Québécois.
16. Home voting security would require an addition (**chip/card reader**) to the telephone receiver to read the details on a voter specific identity card (see below). Such an addition would not be very expensive, especially considering the huge amount of money that can be saved by the resulting simplification in the electoral process.
17. Using the I.D.Card would allow for a continuous updating of **voter lists** since the card would be kept updated at all time due to its multi functionality.

### The Identification Card

Each Canadian Citizen, eligible to participate in the governing of this country, should be equipped with a unique identification card. This could take the form of a credit card or a memory chip for a digital camera or iPod device. It must be a device that can contain a large amount of data. For lack of a better word let's call it the **I.D.Card**. The I.D.Card will contain all pertinent data relative to the individual, such as (but not limited to):

1. **Citizenship and/or Immigration.** At birth or upon becoming an eligible voting citizen, the appropriate authorities will enter the necessary details to proof whom the individual is and that he/she is eligible to vote in Federal, Provincial and/or Municipal elections. In cases where an individual is eligible to vote in, say, municipal elections but not in Federal or Provincial elections, the I.D.Card will so indicate. This I.D.Card may be made to satisfy as a border-crossing document also. Details could include voice, eyeball/iris and fingerprint data. Different authorities may require access to this data. Only those parts that are legitimately their concern should be accessible to them through a secret access code. The I.D.Card's owner will have "Read Only" access

2. **Minorities.** The card would identify if the holder wishes to be considered a legitimate member of a recognized Minority group. This would allow for dissemination of the voting results to accommodate the needs of these Minorities. Since the total of each Minority group will then also be known, and the number of them voting for/against an issue in a mini-referendum is obtained during the vote, the Government can make allowances to give them due consideration. A proper authority such as the Citizenship and/or Immigration authorities must do the registration as a Member of a recognized Minority. Minorities could be either of an ethnic, cultural or religious nature or of any other type (handicapped people, refugees?) as determined by suitable authorities. The I.D.Card's owner will have "Read Only" access.
3. **Medical Information.** Only certified medical practitioners will be able to add data to this section. Access is strictly by secret code known to the medical practitioners only. This data will be of crucial importance during medical emergencies. The I.D.Card's owner will have "Read Only" access.
4. **Criminal or Police Information.** Should the individual have a criminal record or be listed on the "Dangerous Offenders List", the Judicial Authorities will be able to add data to this section of the I.D.Card. Access is strictly by secret code known to the judicial authorities only. The I.D.Card's owner will have "Read Only" access.
5. **Military Service Information.** Military Authorities could use this I.D.Card to identify their military personnel for example to determine eligibility for Veteran privileges. It would also provide their record of Service accomplishment. The I.D.Card's owner will have "Read Only" access.
6. **Financial Information.** Income Tax related information could similarly be accommodated on this I.D.Card.
7. **Social Welfare Information.** The I.D.Card would make controlling welfare fraud much simpler because all pertinent data would be available from one source.
8. **Other Pertinent Information.** Many other useful bits of information could be added, such as religion etc.

Obviously this I.D.Card would in due time contain the sum-total of a person's identity. All entered data is visible to the I.D.Card owner, but he/she will not be able to add, delete or modify any of this information. To do this, he/she would have to request the appropriate and authorized professional to do so. Thus, only licensed doctors can modify the medical record, only judicial officials can modify legal/criminal information.

There will be great concern about security of this information. Would it be possible to assure I.D.Card owners that their information is securely protected? It should be possible to guaranty this, but to play it safe, start the principle of this system on a small/partial scale, such as with elections.

### **Post Script.**

Please note that, when driving this system to its proper end, it may make the National Assembly redundant in that all parliamentary votes could theoretically be done by the I.D.Card system. Quebec could then have a only small group (say 10) of properly trained professional legislators debate an issue and then offer it, fully discussed, to the electorate.

**Talk about true democracy.**