

Our electoral system is broken, so why not change it?

During its fourth weekend of deliberation, the Ontario Citizens' Assembly proposed a German-style mixed-member proportional representation electoral system in which each voter gets two votes: one vote for a candidate and one vote for a party.

With this kind of system, most people vote for a candidate and the party the candidate represents, so the two votes are really one. However, according to the *ACE Encyclopaedia* (<http://aceproject.org>), the two-vote system can be used strategically in a way that would make an alliance such as the Elizabeth May-Stephane Dion "treaty of non-aggression" unnecessary.

During an election campaign, the Liberal and Green parties could talk about possible cooperation rather than publicly disembowelling each other, as is customary now. In this way, in some ridings some Green supporters could be inclined to give their candidate vote to the Liberal candidate to keep the Conservative from slipping through, and in safe ridings some Liberal supporters could give their party vote to the Green party to support a potential ally; a vote for the Liberals is likely to be wasted if the Liberals win more than their share of ridings with the candidate votes.

Moreover, this would be each voter's choice, with no candidates withdrawn, nothing imposed from above and nobody feeling cheated.

The supporters of our first-past-the-post system keep say-

ing "Don't fix what isn't broke." Meanwhile, the third-past-the-post federal Liberal leader, after vainly courting trusted environmental activists who refuse to waste time in our inefficient governments, now resorts to controversial *ad hoc* measures to gain a bit of the credibility that proportional representation governments enjoy.

Just what isn't broken?

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