



**Transcript of Panel Discussion:
“Understanding Ontario's FPTP System”
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George Thomson: GT
David Docherty: DD
Jennifer Smith: JS
Larry Leduc: LL

Jonathan Rose: JR
Margo Bath: MB
Taylor Gilbert: TG

GT: It is with great pleasure that I introduce our three experts who have joined us this morning for what I hope will be a spirited discussion about the Ontario electoral system. I'm going to briefly introduce them, but even a brief introduction will demonstrate the expertise that is with us on the panel. Starting closest to me, Dr. Larry Leduc who is a professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, a well known expert in the field of political behaviour, political parties, and elections, and electoral system design. He's been the author of several books, and has taught in a number of other countries as well. Beside him, Dr. David Docherty, who is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Wilfrid Laurier, he's a well known researcher on Canadian Parliament, and in the field of comparative legislative studies. He's particularly interested in the issue of representation and legislative behaviour of elected representatives that we talked a bit about last weekend. And I thought I'd read this last sentence that I like, "he's regularly taught the large, introductory course in Political Science, and the second year required course in methods and statistics, and lived to tell the tale". And beside him, Dr. Jennifer Smith, Chair of the Department of Political Science at Dalhousie University, who got up at 4 in the morning today to get here to join us today. Her primary area of research is comparative federalism, she too has written several books and articles, as have the other two, and she has served on two Electoral Boundaries Commissions, and she gave constitutional advice during the Meech Lake and Charlottetown exercises in Constitutional Reform. So we have a wonderful group to join us today, and to be ready to answer your questions, and Jonathan is going to moderate the discussion.

JR: Thank you, George. What I've suggested to the panellists is that they provide us 10 minute introductions on the strengths and weaknesses of our present system, and I'll be pretty ruthless in moderating the time, so that we have lots of time for questions – so at 10 minutes I'll interrupt them. We'll take a break after all the presentations, at which time we can collect our thoughts, and then we'll come back into the plenary session, where we'll have a significant amount of time, a little over an hour, to pose questions to all of them around their presentations, as well as your own observations and thoughts about our present system. So I'll just go from the right to the left, and I'll start with Professor Smith.

JS: Thank you very much, Jonathan. I'm very pleased to be here, I can see that this is a really exciting venture for you, and on a very serious matter. I'd just like to begin with a quick caveat; as you know, there are degrees of proportionality, and it depends entirely on a number of factors, obviously on the type of PR system that you use, and so on. In my remarks, I'm kind of assuming that whatever the contending candidate electoral system or systems that it's a robust one, as opposed to a very conservative one. I also, instead of saying Proportional Representation all the time, I thought I'd just say PR. For First-Past-The-Post or Single Member Plurality System, I just can't get SMP out of my head, so whenever I say SMP I just mean the existing system that we use across Canada at the provincial and federal levels.

So here are some thoughts.

To me, the basic difference between PR and SMP is that PR produces more parties, a fairer representation of the strength of the parties in the electorate, and probably more multi-party or coalition governments. I thought I'd just deal with these in turn. First of all, more parties and fairer representation of the parties under PR. More parties: that means more choices for voters,

which is arguably a good thing, and fairer representation of those parties in terms of voter preferences as recorded in the legislature has to be a good thing too. It certainly sounds better than unfair or less-fair representation.

On the other hand, the very likelihood that PR will generate more parties suggests that the bias of PR, especially a robust form, which is what I have in mind, is toward interest articulation more than interest aggregation. And this may or may not be a desirable thing. Interest articulation is all about demand, demanding this policy and that policy, possibly from a defined or even narrow perspective. To the extent that PR encourages the establishment of political parties that can appeal to a particular slice of the electorate and win seats by doing so. To that extent, PR rewards interest articulation, stressing what differentiates the group. And to some extent, it discourages interest aggregation, or the search for a common denominator that enables individuals with varied interests to vote for the same party. I thought maybe in the discussion following the panel that one way we might pursue this point or consider it further would be to use the example of the Green Party which is new-ish at the Federal Level.

My third point, then, moving on, is that more parties and fairer representation of them under a relatively robust form of PR spell the likelihood of coalition government; and you've discussed this this morning, Jonathan, not the certainty of it, but the likelihood of it. And to me, and this is kind of my main point to make here this morning, to me, this really is the crux of the debate. In other words, this debate over electoral systems that you're having is really a debate about the vices and virtues of single party versus multi-party or coalition government. And I'm certainly not the only one who thinks that; we have many leading experts in this field, including my two panellists this morning; also Andre Blais, for instance, in Quebec at the Université de Montreal who thinks the same as I do on this point.

Now there are at least a couple arguments in favour of coalition governments. One is that they're centrist and moderate because in the end they're a combination of parties. And since smaller parties especially can be expected to try to differentiate themselves in elections run under PR systems, I'm not sure exactly how persuasive the moderation argument actually is. But there is a second argument, and it actually is quite persuasive, I think, or can be particularly in the Canadian context; and this argument in favour of coalition governments is that they serve as a check on the power of the Premier, if you're speaking at the Provincial level, or the Prime Minister. And as you know, in parliamentary systems, that power can be quite formidable.

However, there are arguments against coalition government, beginning with the old chestnut about them being unstable, and as you probably know, observers have been mesmerized by this so called 'Italian Syndrome' in Germany between the World Wars. But one can also find examples of very stable coalition governments. So to me, that's really not a terribly persuasive position. Clearly there are other important factors that are involved in this issue of whether or not coalition governments are stable. A stronger argument, I think, against coalition government, is that voters have no say in coalition formation, beyond having put some of the principles in contention simply by voting for them. Voters are not necessarily privy to the deals struck to form the coalition. Now, having said that, one also has to say, on the other side, that voters can of course can voice their opinion about the deals that were struck to form the coalition government in the next election. So it's not as if voters have no input, it's a retrospective input, if you like.

Finally, and I think again Jonathan put this very well, as he was canvassing the arguments 'pro' and 'con', there is the argument about responsibility or the thought that it's easy for coalition partners to 'pass the buck'. So it's harder for the voter to get an answer to the question "who's responsible for that policy" if they're directing it to a coalition or multi-party government. Under single-party government, it's really easy to answer the question.

So my final observations run something like this; some versions of proportional representation are so conservative that they are unlikely to make much difference in the conduct of political life. I mean, you can come up with a system that really isn't going to make a whole lot of difference; it would include an injection of PR. Others are robust, and are likely to make quite a difference as the players adjust to the new rules. So, I think it's worth saying, even though it sounds a little traditional, it's worth saying that given the country's record of political stability, relatively speaking, it seems to me that the onus is on those who seek to change this vital component of the political system. It should be well understood that a robust version of PR would take Ontario into uncharted waters. The existing electoral system in this province is part of a package that has been in effect for a very long time, and a change in part of the package will most definitely affect other parts of it. And the ways in which it will affect other parts of it mostly will be unforeseen. The reason is because when people try to figure out what's going to happen when they make a change, they're always looking through the rear-view mirror, and imagining on the basis of what people have done. But political actors will accommodate themselves to new rules, and they will learn how to work those rules to their own advantage.

JR: Thank you, Professor Smith. I certainly appreciate you keeping within 10 minute times. I'm sure your co-panellists will follow that as well, hint hint. I'll now hand it over to Professor Docherty.

DD: Thank you for having me. Just to echo Jennifer's comments, congratulations all of you for taking time --- for social scientists, you are our laboratory. So it is wonderful to be here, and I just want to commend you for the work you're doing. I think it's absolutely fabulous. I'm going to take a slightly different tact than Jennifer, and what I'd like to talk about in my 10 minutes is the relationship between our Westminster parliamentary system that we have in Ontario and the way we elect people. Because I think there is a relationship there that is worth exploring and understanding as you go about your deliberations. I'll say upfront that when it comes to our parliamentary system, the fusion of the legislature and the executive in one Assembly, I'm evangelical. I love our parliamentary system. I'm more agnostic on how we get our people to Parliament. And so, in terms of choosing electoral systems to get people to Parliament, I think there's a good debate to be had, and I'm glad you're having that debate. What I'd like to do is tie a little bit of how we elect people to the roles they perform when they're in the legislature.

Very quickly, the functions of a parliamentary legislature are essentially, and we can probably talk about them quickly in four different things they're supposed to do. There's a representation function, and it's tied in some ways to geography, as Jonathan pointed out, and I'll talk a bit about that. There's a scrutiny/accountability function that is keeping government honest. Our parliament allows a government to form and govern, we choose a cabinet, the Premier or Prime Minister chooses a cabinet and we have to allow them to govern, and we also have to have an alternative government out there. There has to be an option, should that government fall, for somebody else to replace them, and some kind of public forum where people can say "hey, there is an alternative", typically an opposition political party.

Our SMP or single member plurality system, First-Past-the-Post, does a great job of both C and D; it does a great job of allowing a government to form and govern, and it does a pretty good job of providing an alternative government. If we look at the history of Ontario, despite the fact that we did have 42 years of Conservative rule, uninterrupted Conservative rule from 1943-1985, we have had governments form, and opposition parties be in place, and we have had since 1985 a series of different governments governing. So I think the evidence that we have that C and D work is pretty well overwhelming. It's pretty much there. Voters have seen alternative governments in terms of opposition parties, and they have voted for them. I think In Ontario since 1985, we've done a pretty good job of kicking the rascals out when we think they need to be kicked out. So our single member plurality system and our Westminster legislative system do a pretty good job of those two.

But what about A and B? Representation and Accountability. I think that this is where we kind of come to some of the more difficult problems that we've been facing in Ontario. And when you're making your deliberations about which way to go, it may be that if we can solve some of those representation and accountability problems, you may not want to move away from SMP or you may think that they are important enough that SMP might actually go some of the way to solving those. Those are the things that I want to spend a couple minutes talking about.

In terms of representation, what I'm about to say is not a criticism of Conservative Party politics, nor an endorsement of Liberal or New Democratic Party politics. So, what I'm about to say is not a criticism of the Conservative Party of Ontario, and I want to be very clear about that; however, it is very critical of something that the former Premier Mike Harris did that I think he did for all the wrong reasons, when he substantially reduced the size of the Ontario legislature from 130 seats to 103. Because what he did, I think, affected very much the representation and the scrutiny/accountability function of the Ontario Legislature and the men and women who are elected to serve there. Mr. Harris made the argument of the Conservative Party during the Common Sense Revolution, made the argument that 'politicians spend money', therefore, if you want to spend less money, have fewer politicians.

In the Canadian, in the Westminster Parliamentary system, nothing could be further from the truth. Cabinets spend money. Cabinet ministers spend money. Legislatures and legislators keep them accountable. What happened in Ontario in 1986-87, sorry, in 1996-97, was that they reduced the seats from 130 to 103. They did not substantially reduce the size of Cabinet, but they did reduce the number of men and women keeping them accountable, both in the government, back-benches or private members, and in the Opposition. That had a dramatic impact on accountability and representation.

First off, they redrew the ridings based on the Federal model. They took the federal ridings for Ontario and said "ok, the Federal Boundary Commissions drew these ridings, they have 103, that's the number we'll use". Now, except for those of us who love elections studies, it made a nice package, because for the first time we could kind of look and say "hey, how many people vote one way provincially, and one way the other?", and the boundaries overlap, so it was great for us 'electoral geeks' up here. But other than that, I'm not too sure what purpose it served.

Fundamentally, if you're a Federal Member of Parliament, it does not matter how many hospitals or school boards are in your district, because when someone phones you about a problem for a hospital or school board, you say "that's a matter of provincial responsibility". If you're a provincial MPP, it matters greatly how many hospitals, school boards, municipalities etc. are in your riding. And so, I think one of the things that happened was it wasn't as though the phones didn't ring as much in 103 ridings, they rang as much, and there were just fewer phones to pick up the calls. So MPPs' offices became busier, they had to work harder and hire more staff in order to deal with all those work-load and representation functions. And if you look at Constitutional responsibility, one could probably safely argue that MLAs or MPPs do a lot more constituency work in terms of healthcare, education, municipalities than takes place federally. So that became a representation issue.

In terms of scrutiny and accountability, it became very much more difficult for fewer members to keep Cabinet accountable. One of the things that did happen then was that you also will increase the odds if you are a government backbencher of being selected to a larger Cabinet if there is fewer of you in the first place.

Here's where I don't know how much time I have, Jonathan, but I'm going to make my final kind of argument. One of the things that I think would go a long way to solving some of the problems of SMP and party discipline is if you dramatically increase the number of seats in the Ontario

Legislature. Now, I've got tenure, so I'm allowed to say that. I'm allowed to make the case for more politicians, because I'm not running for office, and I've got the security of tenure. But, think about it this way, one of I think the key facets of work, and Jonathan talked about party discipline in his comments this morning on SMP, one of the things that I think informally works towards party discipline, is that if you always think that you're going to have a shot at Cabinet, you will never think about having a Legislative or Parliamentary career, and you will always think about making sure that your leader thinks you're a great person, and that you're sticking with them.

If you look at Great Britain and the British House of Commons, most men and women who get elected to the British House of Commons know from the start that they will never be in Cabinet. Therefore, they don't necessarily have to, and their successes lie at the representation level. Therefore, their own success means keeping their constituents happy, and also, building a legislative or parliamentary career. That actually lends itself very nicely to the accountability and scrutiny function; they're not afraid to question their own leader, they're not afraid to work hard in committees and see that their success as a representative is bound up in those kind of things. The allure of cabinet is kind of tarnished, because they know that they are far less likely to get there.

So I think that when you're starting to engage in your deliberations, it's very important to think about the relationship between the size of ridings, how men and women are elected and what their duties and responsibilities are once they're in Parliament. We can talk about question and answer period, I'd be happy to go into further detail, because one of the areas I haven't discussed but I think is worth discussing is how people chosen from a list engage in representation, and what are the pros and cons there, but there's also certainly some pros in terms of the ability to engage more fully in the accountability and scrutiny function if you don't have that other job attached to it as well. So I'm happy to discuss those in the question and answer. I'll wrap up there.

JR: Great, thank you, David. Our final panellist this morning is Professor Larry Leduc, from the University of Toronto.

LL: Thank you, Jonathan. First I'd like to echo the sentiments of my panellists in congratulating all of you on taking on this important work. It's wonderful to see the debate about electoral systems moving out of the classroom and into the real world of politics and representation. So for us scholars, this is a very rare and unique opportunity. And I'd also like to thank you for inviting me to participate in this session this morning.

I'm going to take a somewhat different tact than the others. Electoral systems will seem to many of you who are encountering this debate for the first time, as an incredibly complicated topic. And it starts to look more complicated the more you hear about it, because there will be more of us talking at you about different systems, and more references to other places, and other times, and other countries. If you take the plunge and start to delve into some of the textbooks and journals on this topic, you may find some of them almost impenetrable. And then after a while, you may throw up your hands and say, "I just don't know, maybe we ought to just keep what we have" and not, as Jennifer was saying earlier, venture into these uncharted waters.

I'm here to tell you this morning that this is not a complicated topic, it is really, if you attack it at the fundamental issues, quite simple. It's part of a debate that has been going on in the world for hundreds of years, and the basic issues are really quite simple to confront, even though choosing between them maybe somewhat more difficult. There are really only two ideas about representation in democratic societies. And these two ideas have been around for a long time. And there are no new ideas. Well, I should be careful here; there is one new idea, but I'll save that one for later, because I want to concentrate in this first session on the two old ideas.

The first old idea is the British Idea. It developed in Britain as the British political system evolved from a monarchy into a democratic system. It was the idea that you ought to have a parliament, that parliament should be elected, and that the members to be elected to it should come from particular places. So you divided the country up into districts, and you elected one person to represent each district. And if you look at that model as it has developed in other places, it is pretty much the same everywhere. The United States divides the country into states, and elects 2 senators from every state. Britain divides the country into 650 constituencies, and elects 1 person from every constituency. We, here in Ontario, divide the province up into 103 constituencies or 130 or more as David would prefer, and elect 1 person to represent each one. You folks here in the Citizens' Assembly were chosen in that way, there is one of you from each of the 103 districts. So the idea doesn't vary much from place to place even though the size of the legislatures vary, the geographic boundaries vary, and so on. It developed out of Britain as Britain developed into a more modern society, and the various towns and shires developed into counties and cities, and then you know you had to redraw the map every 10 years or so, but the idea didn't change at all.

Why do we use that system here, in Ontario? The answer is Britain; Britain gave it to us. We never had a debate about it; there was no founding convention in Ontario that said, "Gee, what kind of system would we like?" The British believed, as powerful countries often have throughout history, that their way of doing things was the best way of doing things. And so, as they travelled around the world colonizing different places, they handed them that system.

Who uses the British system in the world today? Canada, the United States, Great Britain, India, and then you kind of run out of examples, because the old British dominions still used it, a few have changed, like New Zealand, Australia developed a modification for it when it became independent in the early part of the 20th Century. But you don't find it in too many other places in the world that don't have a British connection. So we never had that debate because the British never really opened that debate in any of the former dominions. And I think that's why it's so great that we're having that debate here in Ontario in the year 2006, because we should have had it many, many years ago.

The other big idea comes out of Continental Europe, and again, it's very old. The idea is that a representative assembly, whatever you call it, whether it be a Parliament, a Legislature, an Assemblée Nationale, or whatever, should represent the society which chooses it. The idea is that you try to develop a mechanism of representation that reflects the society, and that doesn't represent the geographic divisions. So, therefore, this will generally involve choosing a group of people to represent you, because societies are complicated. So, therefore, if you have a society that is divided, let's say along the lines of religion or ethnicity or language, it is very important, from that point of view, that the legislature or representative body reflect those divisions. If you have a country that is divided between Catholics and Protestants, you don't want an assembly that represents only the Catholics. Northern Ireland could teach us a lesson along those lines. If you have a society that is divided along language, you don't want a parliament or legislature that only reflects the interests of the dominant linguistic group. And again the same for any other kind of social, or ethnic or religious divisions that I might mention. So, the basic principle is to make sure that that legislature, whatever it is, reflects the society. And therefore, you would develop a formula, usually involving whatever the representative unit is, of several people, sometimes more representing the group of people they represent.

Somehow they managed to take that into account when you folks here in the Citizens' Assembly were chosen. I don't know quite how they did it, but there was some sort of odd process there, because even though there's one person representing each riding, they somehow told us that, yes there would be an equal number of women in this assembly, and yes, it will reflect the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Ontario, and so on. So they were sensitive to those concerns,

even though they were still operating within the First-Past-the-Post kind of model. So, you know, it's a little bit of tinkering may get you to the same place.

Now, the problem with both models, and I think Jonathan in his introductory remarks and our panellists in their comments have already identified some of those problems, is that of course, they evolved. They're not pure types. And one of the things that introduced complications into both of these models was the rise of political parties, because in the British model you could no longer just choose a local representative. "Oh, we'd like Joe, or Sam, or Mary, or Anne to represent our district". Because you weren't just choosing someone local, you were choosing a party person. And the minute that party person was chosen, they represented the party, and not just the riding.

And then it gets more complicated if you follow the history and the traditions and the practices, because parties started to do things like parachuting candidates into particular ridings. When Michael Ignatieff went out to find a riding to represent, he found Etobicoke, and people from Etobicoke said "well, gee! He's not from around here, you know, I don't know if this is a good idea or not". It's sort of taking the old principle of electing your person to represent you, and bending it around like a pretzel, until you've got something in the end that isn't quite what it was originally to be. And that's party politics that has introduced those complications, and they've evolved over the years.

Same thing, of course, with PR, because it's nice to talk about a model that represents a society, but the minute you put parties in there, it matters less who the ethnic or linguistic or gender groups are, than what the party mix is. So what they worry about in Europe today is not so much that, as might have been the case years ago, but rather the question of are different political philosophies or points of view represented in the proper balance, and making sure that the small parties have their quota of representation in different systems. So the European model today has evolved into a model where you say "ok, if party X gets 10% of the vote, we ought to make sure that they get 10% of the seats, we can't leave them out." We don't seem to have any qualms in Canada about leaving out the small parties, they take their chances.

Now, if we sort of fast forward to the debate as it is today, we realize that there are other problems with both of these models. Since what's on the agenda today is First-Past-the-Post, I want to concentrate on the problems with First-Past-the-Post. Jonathan gave a nicely balanced presentation in the opening session where he said "you know, here's what the folks who support it say, here's what the people who don't like it say". I don't have to be quite so balanced because I'm not in the classroom, I'm here as part of a panel, and the three of us all have different points of view on this.

So I'm going to emphasize the problems of First-Past-the-Post, because I think there are some serious problems with it. And you could see this reflected in the debates that have gone on other places as well. New Zealand threw it out, for example, a few years ago. There's another British dominion that had First-Past-the-Post, only because the British gave it to them. They had a big debate, and at the end of their debate they tossed it out. New democracies that have developed in the world today have had these debates, because often they have been writing new constitutions, and having to make choices for the first time; the debate, as I said earlier, that we never had. And they don't tend to choose First-Past-the-Post either.

When Scotland, here, part of Great Britain, set up a new Scottish Parliament a few years ago, and that's quite recent, they didn't choose First-Past-the-Post. Why not? Why do we find it being eliminated from places that have it, not chosen by new places that are having this debate? Because they worry about many of these problems; the distortions that it causes, its tendency to over-reward the big parties, its tendency to create majority governments that are not really majority governments, the Rae government that was mentioned in the presentation earlier

where you saw how the NDP has waxed and waned in Ontario over the years. The Rae government got 38% of the vote, and it was a majority government, with a big majority of seats! That's the kind of problems that we worry about.

We worry about the representation of women and minorities in modern Ontario, because it's a complex, multicultural society, and those things are important. It is very important to have more women in politics today. So we don't want to leave those things to chance. The days when you had one person chosen from each riding, and that one person was a middle-aged, male lawyer, those days are gone. And no one wants a system like that anymore. The problem of not representing small parties is a serious problem, because those small parties have important points of view on important issues, many of which are new to today's political world, like Green Party's, for example. And the idea that those viewpoints are not properly articulated within the legislature is just not as acceptable today as it might have been 100 years ago.

Lastly, and I will wind up, the turnout issue is important, because many of us worry about the fact that turnout has been going down in so many places today, particularly in countries like Great Britain and Canada that use First-Past-the-Post. That's where it's gone down more than it has in many other places, and yes, there is research that demonstrates this connection, and we know what the lynchpin is! The lynchpin is competitiveness, because the more competitive a political system is, the higher the turnout gets.

And PR systems tend to be more competitive; people can see that their votes count, even if they vote for small parties. So you don't get the dilemmas in those systems that you get in First-Past-the-Post where people look at a constituency and say "oh, that's a safe seat. I know that party X is going to win, so therefore, what's the point of my voting". Or they look at it and say that "I've got to vote strategically. I've got to vote for some party that I don't really want to keep some other party that I don't want even more from getting in". That's the kind of dilemmas that we face in First-Past-the-Post, and you don't have those dilemmas in PR systems, because people have a realistic range of choices to make, they can go out and vote for those choices, and they know that those votes are going to be counted, and that their representatives are going to be sitting in the Legislature articulating their point of view.

JR: Thank you very much, Larry. I think our panellists have given us a wide range of options and thoughts about the present system. We have about 5 minutes before we adjourn for break, so I was going to begin questions, and Margo is eager to jump in, so I'm going to turn it over to Margo for the first question.

MB: Actually, it's a comment I want to make. I'm a little concerned always when we're compared to elected, when in fact we are selected. So we're not accountable to a riding, and I think that distinction needs to be made about the Citizens' Assembly.

JR: Okay, thank you. Taylor?

TG: Yes, this is for Dr. Smith. You talked about stability and the old chestnut of less stability under the PR coalition governments, and one of the examples you mentioned was Italy after the Second World War. Were you suggesting that this instability there was not connected to the fact that these were coalition governments in Italy, but rather due to some other cause? If so, could you expand on that please?

JS: The point I wanted to make is a simple one. One of the arguments that people make against coalition governments is this instability argument, and they would often use the examples that I had mentioned; Germany, between the wars, and Italy is another example that is often used. You can find this especially in some of the old textbooks, and it's really quite interesting where they go through. My point was simply that certainly since the Second World War, countries, and

Germany would have to be included in that example in the post-Second World War period, that have had coalition governments. And we find that those coalition governments are fairly stable. So my thought is that there must be more factors involved in this issue of whether or not coalition governments can be expected to be stable or not. There have to be more factors involved in that determination than simply the electoral system. Now, that could be one factor, for sure, but there have to be other factors involved in this as well. So that was the main point I wanted to make, because otherwise, every time you saw, you would expect the coalition governments were always somewhat precarious. But it turns out that they're not always precarious.

DD: If I could just...very, very quickly. Just remember a government may fall, and we talk about say Italy and failed governments, it doesn't necessarily mean that there's going to be more elections. Okay, more governments doesn't necessarily mean more elections. And I think that if you think about Ontario in 1985, between 1985 and 1987 we had 2 different governments, and only 1 election. Frank Miller won the most seats, sat and met the Assembly, the Speech from the Throne was defeated, and David Peterson went down to see John Black Aird, who at that time was the Lieutenant-Governor, and said "I think I can make a government work", and he had 2 years to make it work and there wasn't another election.

So if there is a concern about more parties meaning a greater likelihood that a government may fail, our Westminster system actually places a lot of authority in the Governor General or the Lieutenant-Governor in Ontario to allow for different opportunities to government. So just because we've got more coalitions or possible coalitions doesn't necessarily mean more elections. So if there's a fear of more elections, and we love elections up here, but I understand that some people don't, tell me their names, I'll talk to them, I'm sure I'll get them in a room for 5 minutes I'm sure I can convince them why elections are great! But it doesn't mean more elections.

JR: I see a number of hands, and we're just about ready for a break. The next session will start with questions from Garth, Edmund and then John Townsend, but I'll ask Larry if he wants to comment on that last question.

LL: Just briefly, I don't want to sound too academic about this, but we do need a better definition of instability, because as David just said, instability might mean a collapse of a coalition, and simply bringing a new party into the coalition, and that's not an election. Or, it might mean more elections. Italy, it is very difficult to understand that case if you go back and look at it historically, because Italy, by one measure, was very unstable because it had all these rotating coalitions where small parties came in and out. But it was very stable by another definition because the same party was in power for 40 years. And the problem in Italy was not so much the collapses of the coalitions, but the fact that there was no way to throw the rascals out. So you could get two different points of view on just what was stable and what was unstable in Italy.

JR: Okay. On that note, let's take a brief break, and collect your thoughts and we'll begin question period after that. Thanks. Thank you all.