

## Proportional Representation.

**A**CCORDING to the spirit of our Constitution every Canadian has a right to participate in the making of our laws and in determining his own civil rights and duties. But as every Canadian cannot, from the nature of things, enter personally into the councils of the nation, he is represented in Parliament by one chosen in a limited constituency. This representative is chosen by the majority and represents the views of the majority only. The minority on the other hand is not represented and those who compose it have *de facto* no voice in the conduct of public affairs.

Thus, in 1904, in the Province of Nova Scotia the Conservatives cast 45,000 votes without electing a representative, while the Liberals with 55,000 votes sent 18 representatives to Ottawa. In consequence half the electors of Nova Scotia plus 5,000 were represented in parliament for the following term by the total representation of the Province and the other half, less 5,000 were not represented at all.

Proportional representation is calculated to remedy this state of things so that a majority of the electors will be represented by a majority of the elected representatives and the minority by a minority.

In this country if Proportional Representation were adopted as a *modus eligendi* it would be necessary to rearrange the constituencies, and instead of electing one member for each district as at present constituted we would elect several members representing a much larger constituency, and the elector instead of voting for a single candidate would vote for several at once and on the same ballot.

Let us illustrate what at first sight may appear slightly difficult to understand. We shall suppose that Prince Edward Island is one constituency privileged

(as it is at present) to elect four members to the House of Commons. Four Liberals and four Conservatives are nominated. The returning officer for the whole Island, with his office located let us say in Charlotte-town, after counting the ballots finds them distributed as follows:---

Liberals		Conservatives	
Warburton	- - 12,461	Lefurgey	- - 13,664
Prowse	- - 13,200	Martin	- - 10,942
Richards	- - 11,360	McLean	- - 12,440
Hughes	- - 12,880	Fraser	- - 10,683
<hr/> 49,901		<hr/> 47,729	

Arranging the candidates of each party according to the number of votes they receive we have:---

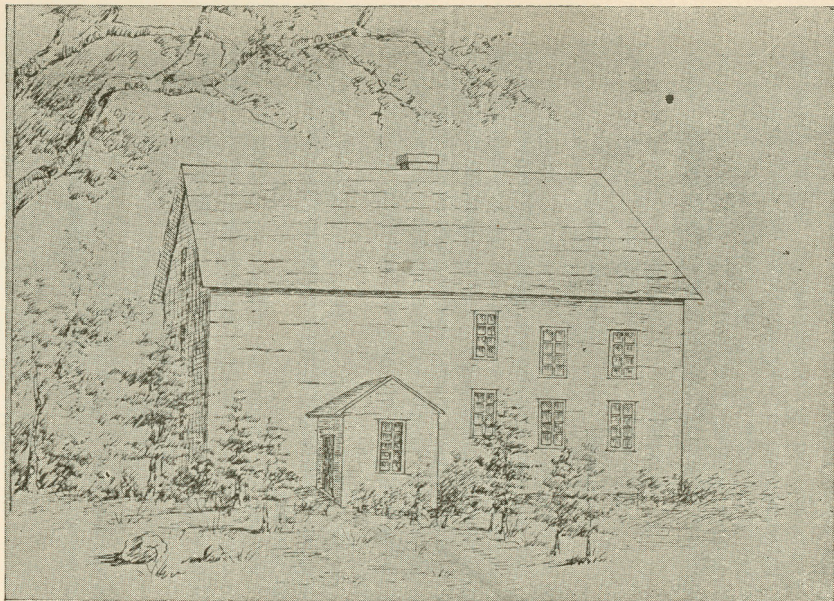
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Now, according to the method of Hondt: "In order to appoint the seats among the several candidates. the total number of votes polled by each party is divided successively by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc., and the quotients thus obtained are set down in order of magnitude 'till a number of quotients is obtained equal to the number of members to be elected. The smallest of these quotients serves as a common divisor and there is allotted to each party a number of representatives equal to the number of times its total vote contains the common divisor."

In other words the total number of votes of each party is divided by 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. thus:---

Liberals		Conservatives	
49,901 ÷ 1 = 49,901		47,729 ÷ 1 = 47,729	
49,901 ÷ 2 = 24,950		47,729 ÷ 2 = 23,864	
49,901 ÷ 3 = 16,632		47,729 ÷ 3 = 15,910	
49,901 ÷ 4 = 12,475		47,729 ÷ 4 = 11,932	





## ST. ANDREW'S COLLEGE

Opened November 30th, 1831, at St. Andrew's, P. E. I.

Placing the required number of the above quotients (in our case four) in order of magnitude beginning with the largest and choosing from alternate sides we have:—

- (1) 49,901
- (2) 47,729
- (3) 24,950
- (4) 23,864

The fourth quotient being smallest serves as a common divisor for both aggregates:—

$$49,901 \div 23,864 = 2$$

$$47,729 \div 23,864 = 2$$

and to quote Hondt once more: “There is apportioned to each party a number of representatives equal to the number of times its total vote contains the common divisor.”

It follows from this in the present case that each party will be represented in the Commons by two members.

But there are four candidates on each side and it remains to select from among these the required number of members. This offers little difficulty: the candidates of each party who have the largest numbers of votes naturally would expect to be returned. In our case the representatives for Prince Edward Island would of course be:—

Liberals	Conservatives
Prowse	Lefurgey
Hughes	McLean

Under the present system, the Conservative party in Prince Edward Island, with only 210 votes less than the Liberals in a total of 28,782 (Dominion Election 1908), is represented in the Commons by one member only. Proportional Representation would remedy this obvious unfairness.

But there are other advantages. We would then have none of these bye-elections which as is well known are the occasions of public disorder, when the party in power invariably concentrates all its efforts to elect its own particular candidate and generally



succeeds. In case of death or resignation the candidate of the same party next on the list would be called upon to fill the vacancy.

Since under this system both parties would be represented in the legislature in proportion to their actual numbers all attempts to acquire a majority of votes by corrupt and dishonest means would be useless, and as a consequence our electoral contests would lose much of their violence and result in more intelligent expressions of the popular will.

If both parties were represented in the House of Commons in proportion to their actual strength in the country, policies of general interest would be adopted and pursued by both, and elections would no longer be decided on questions of local interest such as the building of a bridge or a few miles of railway. Each party moreover would see to it that none but honest men would be presented for election---men of talent and integrity, unlike many of those who now represent us and who evince but little more energy than is necessary to draw their sessional indemnity.

What has been said above does not apply only to Liberals and Conservatives, but to every political group capable of electing a representative to Parliament.

Proportional representation has been already adopted by Belgium, Finland and Denmark, where it gives excellent satisfaction, and in both England and France it has many advocates. If it is an injustice in Belgium, Finland and Denmark to deny to any party an adequate representation in the councils of the nation it is also an injustice in Canada.

L. D. DURAND.



The man who has not any thing to boast of but his illustrious ancestors is like a potato---the only good belonging to him is under ground.---Sir Thos. Overbury.