

FACT SHEET

Commission Appointed

The Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future was appointed in February, 2005 by the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Legislative Management. This was in response to recommendations made in 2003 by the earlier PEI Electoral Reform Commission chaired by Chief Justice Norman Carruthers.

Context

The 2003 Report of the PEI Electoral Reform Commission identified a range of electoral systems and recommended that the PEI electorate consider a Mixed Member Proportional System. This system awards some seats in the legislature to parties based on the percentage of popular vote gained in the general election.

Commission Mandate

- Develop and conduct a public education program to increase among Islanders an understanding of our present "first past the post" electoral system and as an alternative, a mixed member proportional system.
- Develop a plebiscite question on which electoral system is preferred by Islanders.
- Recommend when a plebiscite on this matter should be held.

Proposed Mixed Member Proportional Model

On May 27th, the Commission proposed for consideration a Mixed Member Proportional Model, which retains the current Legislative Assembly seat count of 27. In the proposed model, electors would cast an initial ballot to elect representatives from 17 newly constituted districts, most of which would account for between 5,000 and 5,500 electors. At the same time, electors would cast a second ballot to select the party they prefer. As a result of this popular vote, 10 additional members would be elected on an Island-wide basis from lists provided by the parties. Any party that gains 5% or more of the popular vote would be eligible to elect members in this second ballot.

Next Steps

The Commission will carry out a public education program on electoral reform. Through this process, Islanders will look at the two electoral systems to get ready for a plebiscite vote on which system is preferred.

First a Symposium is planned for mid-June, involving expert speakers who will examine and debate the issues.

A series of public meetings will then be held in the fall of 2005. The pros and cons of both a Mixed Member Proportional System and the First Past the Post System will be presented to the public and it is anticipated that significant discussion and debate will result.

A date for a plebiscite will then be recommended and Islanders will be asked to cast a vote for either a proposed Mixed Member Proportional System or the current First Past the Post System.

Commission Members

Leonard Russell, Chair, Graham's Road

J'Nan Brown, Commissioner, Clyde River

Art Currie, Commissioner, Argyle Shore

Hans Connor, Commissioner, Charlottetown

Blake Doyle, Commissioner, Malpeque

Rob MacLean, Commissioner, Lewes

Yvonne Pitre, Commissioner, Richmond

James Lee, Commissioner, Stanhope