

*Martin
Levenson*

Triple E Senate no benefit to Albertans



Don't be sucked in by the tiny Tories on campus currently flogging a Senate Reform petition.

They know this issue won't be resolved in the next little while. And if they thought about it, the proposal for a Triple E (Elected, Effective, and Equal) Senate may not be in the best interests of the provincial Tories.

All they're trying to do is plant a seed in your mind; come election time (pretty soon, by most accounts), they'll have spread enough fertilizer to grow that seed into a single plank election campaign.

That way, they don't have to run on their record, or deal with *real* provincial issues, or even acknowledge their Liberal or NDP opponents.

Running against Ottawa (the big, bad bogeyman) has always been a successful strategy in the past; the Tories are betting that Albertans still aren't politically mature enough to sort the wheat from the chaff. If the Liberals or the NDP were in power, they'd make the same bet.

It's ironic that if there was Senate Reform along the lines proposed, the strategy of Ottawa-bashing would no longer be an option in future elections.

But it's not going to happen. And there is really no need for it.

For one thing, no Prime Minister would be willing to give up the power of making patronage appointments to the Senate. It's

too nice a reward for those who have helped his party gain power.

Secondly, there will never be unanimous agreement on Senate Reform. Under the amending formula of the Meech Lake Accord, all the provinces have to agree.

This means that Quebec and Ontario, with 24 Senate seats each and a population of about 15 million, have to agree to equal representation from a province like PEI, which has less than 250,000 people.

If Don Getty was really so fired up about Senate Reform, why didn't he make it a pre-condition to signing the Meech Lake Accord? It's inconsistent to support both Meech Lake and Senate Reform.

Third, it's debatable whether we'd get better representation with a reformed Senate. Under the present system of executive federalism, the premiers meet periodically to iron out their differences. They all have roughly equal power and can be effective spokesmen for their provinces. Why change things?

There are two faulty assumptions (at least) that the non-issue of Senate reform hinges upon. One is that our interests are not represented in Ottawa, and the other is that the interests of the four western provinces are always united.

We really can't bitch about our representation in Ottawa. Alberta has two very highly placed Cabinet

ministers in Joe Clark and Don Mazankowski. Don't tell these guys they don't represent our interests.

Alberta didn't like the National Energy Program. It's gone. Alberta didn't like the Foreign Investment Review agency. It's gone.

Alberta wanted funding for the Lloydminster heavy oil upgrader. We got it. Alberta wanted funding for a third tarsands project (OSLO) in Ft. McMurray. We got it.

And if we don't think the other 24 representatives are effective, why did we vote them in? Maybe the real problem is our system of party discipline.

We also can't assume that Alberta's interests are the same as the other western provinces'. For example, the decision to award the F-18 servicing contract to a Montreal firm may have screwed Manitoba, but not Alberta; the firm opened a workshop in Edmonton, creating 15 jobs.

It's time Albertans grew up. If we are committed to Canada's democratic system of representation by population, we have to live with the reality that the majority of people live in central Canada.

In a democracy, the majority rules. So unless we convince more people to move to Alberta...

The "issue" of Senate Reform is a red herring being dragged across the campaign trail.

It's dead. And it stinks.

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To receive a brochure and an application form, contact your provincial coordinator at:

Mr. Richard Slevinsky
Senior Consultant
Mrs. France Senechal
Program Assistant
Official Languages Programs
Special Programs Branch
Department of Advanced Education
9th Floor, Devonian Tower East
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0L3 Ph. 427-5538

or

Student Awards Office, 252 Athabasca Hall, University of Alberta,
Ph. 492-3221

DEADLINE: February 17, 1989

OFFICIAL-LANGUAGES MONITOR PROGRAM 1989

PART-TIME: A second-language monitor is a postsecondary student who enrolls full-time in an institution (usually in another province) and, at the same time, helps a second-language teacher for 6 to 8 hours per week. Some francophone monitors will be placed in French-language schools in minority areas. For their participation in the program, monitors received up to \$3200 in 1988-89 and one return trip between the province of residence and the host province.

FULL-TIME: The full-time Monitor Program is funded by the Department of the Secretary of State and administered by the provinces, in conjunction with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Full-time monitors must have completed their cegep studies by the end of 1988-89 school year. They help second-language teachers (French or English), in rural or semi-urban regions, usually in another province, for 25 hours per week. Some francophone monitors will be placed in French-language schools outside Quebec.

In 1988-89 monitors received up to \$9000 for 10 months of participation (from September 1 to June 30) and will be reimbursed for two round-trips a year between their home province and the host province. Participants who change province may receive a settling-in allowance (\$770 in 1988-89). Monitors may also be reimbursed (up to \$1100 in 1988-89) for commuting expenses in the host province. Monitors will be placed in all the provinces and the territories. Applications will also be considered from candidates who wish to work in their home province or territory.

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DEADLINE: February 17, 1989

SNOW JOB

Send us your most horrific, heartrending, or hilarious stories about what happened to you during White Monday.

The 10 best entries will be published in *The Gateway* on Thursday, February 9
300 words max.

Deadline: Feb. 7

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