

# How a "P. R." Election Works

Method of Transfer of Votes Ensures a Representative to Any Group of Electors Which Can Secure a Quota of the Total Vote

## THE RESULT OF THE P.R. ELECTION

No. of Votes—235.

No. of Seats—7.

Quota= $\frac{235}{8}+1=30$ .

Names of Candidates	1st Count	2nd Count		3rd Count		4th Count		5th Count		6th Count		Elected Candidates with order of Election.
		Trans-fer of Borden's surplus	Result	Trans-fer of Henderson's votes	Result	Trans-fer of Bruce's votes	Result	Trans-fer of Good's votes	Result	Trans-fer of Ames' votes	Result	
Ames.....(Un.)	7	+ 4	11	....	11	....	11	....	11	—11	..	Borden (1)
Borden.....(Un.)	50	—20	30	....	30	....	30	....	30	....	30	
Bruce.....(Lab.)	8	....	8	+ 2	10	—10	..	....	..	....	..	Calder (2)
Calder.....(Un.)	20	+10	30	....	30	....	30	....	30	....	30	
Crerar.....(U.F.)	27	....	27	+ 1	28	+ 2	30	....	30	....	30	Crerar (3)
Good.....(U.F.)	9	....	9	+ 1	10	....	10	—10	..	....	..	
Henderson (Lab.)	7	....	7	—7	..	....	..	....	..	....	..	King (5)
King.....(Lib.)	26	....	26	....	26	....	26	+ 5	31	....	31	
Lapointe.....(Lib.)	27	....	27	....	27	....	27	+ 2	29	....	29	Lapointe (7)
Mackenzie (Lib.)	13	....	13	....	13	....	13	....	13	....	13	
Moore.....(Lab.)	19	....	19	+ 3	22	+ 8	30	....	30	....	30	Moore (4)
White.....(Un.)	22	+ 6	28	....	28	....	28	....	28	+ 7	35	
Non-Transferable.	..	....	..	....	..	....	..	+ 3	3	+ 4	7	White (6)
Totals.....	235	....	235	....	235	....	235	....	235	....	235	

The Proportional Representation Society of Canada has issued a leaflet which, by exhibiting the actual workings of the "P.R." system in an imaginary election in a constituency returning seven members gives a more illuminating idea of the system than any amount of mere description.

In this imaginary election there are twelve candidates nominated. It may be noted here that whereas under the present system each party usually, and the strongest party always, nominates as many members as there are seats, there is no inducement to such a policy under P. R. The P. R. system tends to give each party a representation approximately proportionate to its voting strength, and the prospect of its doing so is in no wise increased by nominating too many candidates.

There are four parties contesting in this election. Three of them nominate each one more candidate than they respectively succeed in electing. The Labor Party nominates two more candidates than it can elect, and certainly gains nothing thereby, but it also loses nothing, because the first result of the excessive diffusion of a small vote over too many candidates is to eliminate the lowest candidate and concentrate his supporters upon the remaining Laboratories. This principle would work just as well if Labor had put up six too many candidates instead of two. More elimination, more transfer of votes, and consequently more work for the returning officers would be the only consequence.

### Promotes Group Government

In passing it may be noted that P. R. works very strongly in favor of the group system of government. Instead of debarring from Parliament any body of opinion which cannot secure an absolute majority in some particular constituency or constituencies, it ensures representation to any such body which can secure one-seventh of the votes in a seven-seat district.

In the typical election here illustrated, four Unionists, three Liberals, three Laborites and two United Farmers are put up to contest a seven-seat constituency with 235 voters. Each elector has one vote. This vote, however is transferable. If the candidate first named on the ballot receives more votes than the number necessary to elect or receives fewer votes than any

other candidate his surplus or his total vote, as the case may be, is divided among those who were named as second choice by his whole body of supporters, the distribution being in exact proportion to the number of second-choices which these electors have given to each candidate. This process of elimination and transfer goes on until seven candidates have received the necessary number of votes thus together accounting for the entire poll and the rest have been eliminated. The elector indicates the order of his preferences by writing 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., in the space where we now put a cross against the name of the candidate. He can indicate as many or as few preferences as he desires.

### The First Count

The Returning Officer sorts the ballot papers according to the names marked with the figure 1, and credits each candidate with one vote in respect of each ballot paper on which his name is so marked.

The result is shown in the first column.

The Returning Officer then ascertains the quota, i.e., the minimum number of votes which for a certainty will secure the election of a candidate. In this election this minimum is 30, and is found by dividing 235 (the number of votes polled) by 8 (one more than the number of seats) and by adding 1 to the result of the division. The division of 235 by 8 yields 29 and the quota is 29 plus 1, i.e. 30. In a total poll of 235, eight candidates can obtain as many as 29 votes, but only seven can obtain as many as 30. There are seven members to be elected; any candidate therefore who obtains 30 votes must for a certainty be elected.

The Returning Officer then declares elected every candidate who at the first count obtains a quota of votes or more. Sir Robert Borden has 50 votes and is declared elected.

Sir Robert Borden has received 20 votes more than he wants, and the Returning Officer therefore transfers them in such a way as to do even justice to all candidates marked by Sir Robert's supporters as being their next choice. All Sir Robert's 50 papers are re-examined and sorted according to the names marked with the figure 2. The sorting resulted as follows:—

Ames was second choice on 10 of the 50 papers. Calder was second choice on 25 of the 50 papers.

White was second choice on 15 of the 50 papers. Sir Robert Borden can spare 20 out of his 50 votes; therefore he can spare two out of every five votes. Each candidate is therefore entitled to two-fifths of the papers on which his name is marked with the figure 2.

Mr. Ames is entitled to two-fifths of the 10 papers on which he is second choice, i.e. to four.

Mr. Calder is entitled to two-fifths of the 25 papers on which he is second choice, i.e., to ten.

Mr. White is entitled to two-fifths of the 15 papers on which he is second choice, i. e. to six.

Four, ten and six votes are accordingly transferred to Mr. Ames, Mr. Calder and Mr. White respectively as their proper shares in Sir Robert Borden's surplus. By the transfer of these votes Mr. Calder attains the quota and is declared elected.

After all surplus votes have been transferred the Returning Officer declares defeated the candidate, who is at the bottom of the poll, in this case Mrs. Henderson. The votes recorded for her are not wasted. Her ballot papers are re-examined. Two papers show a second choice for Mr. Bruce, one for Mr. Crerar, one for Mr. Good and three for Mr. Moore. Two, one, one and three votes are accordingly transferred to these candidates respectively.

Mr. Bruce is now at the bottom of the poll. (Mr. Bruce and Mr. Good each have 10 votes, but as Mr. Bruce had less votes than Mr. Good at the first count, he is declared lowest.) Mr. Bruce's papers when re-examined show that 2 of his supporters have indicated Mr. Crerar as their next choice and 8 Mr. Moore. By the transfer of these votes both Mr. Crerar and Mr. Moore attain the quota and are declared elected.

Mr. Good is now at the bottom of the poll, so his ballots are examined for next available choices, i. e., for candidates as yet neither elected nor defeated. Of his ballots 5 show a next available choice for Mr. Mackenzie King, and 2 show a next available choice for Mr. Lapointe. On the transfer of these ballots Mr. King attains the quota and is elected. There are in addition 3 of Mr. Good's ballots on which no available choice is expressed. As the Returning Officer cannot transfer these they are set aside as non-transferable.

Sir Herbert Ames is now declared defeated, and of his ballots 7 show a next available choice for Sir Thomas White, while 4 are found to be non-transferable. Sir Thomas White now attains the quota and is declared elected.

There is still one seat to be filled, with two candidates in the running. But if the excess votes of Mr. King and Sir Thomas White all went to the lowest candidate, Mr. Mackenzie, he would still be the lowest. Mr. Mackenzie is therefore declared defeated and Mr. Lapointe elected.

Each party obtains representation in proportion to its voting strength, and the electors of each party secure as representatives (or representative) the candidates (or candidate) they most prefer.

The illustration shows beyond question that any party that can poll a quota of votes can obtain a representative. If a party is large enough to poll two quotas it will obtain two representatives, and so on.

### Analysis of Result.

Party.	Party vote as shown by first preferences.	Seats won.
Unionist.....	99	3
Liberal.....	66	2
United Farmers...	36	1
Labour.....	34	1