

Canada needs the Senate. Without the Senate, the House of Commons becomes the sole senior level of government.

As it stands right now, Ontario and Quebec comprise the majority of the seats in the House of Commons, approximately 55%. Together they can potentially control legislation and/or exercise significant influence to the detriment of the other provinces, territories or regions in general.

The Senate is the great equalizer. Ontario and Quebec each have twenty-four (24) seats in the Red Chamber out of a total of 105 available seats. Together they have less than 50% of the available seats. No one region is dominant.

Presently, Ontario is short 2 out of its allotted 24 seats.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants an elected Senate. The current Ontario government is not interested in recommending anyone for the Senate. In fact, it is said that Premier Dalton McGuinty would prefer to have the Senate abolished. Is this a desire to exercise the significant influence mentioned above?

In 2009, Ontario loses 3 more Senators due to “aging out” or mandatory retirement. In 2010, Ontario loses another 3 Senators. Ontario loses one more Senate member in 2011 and yet another in 2012.

If no appointments are made within the next 48 months, Ontario will have only 14 of its allotted 24 Senators, leaving Ontario vastly under represented.

Until such time as the Senate is abolished, if that were to happen, Ontario deserves to have equal representation and maintain its share of the regional equality provisions written into our constitution

In the mean time, we need a compromise.

Alberta and British Columbia have an election every four years to designate “*Senators-In-Waiting*”. Should a Senator in their respective province retire or leave office for whatever reason, the Prime Minister can recommend a new Senator to the Governor General from the available standby candidates elected by the people of that province.

Ontario should do the same thing. Ontario can be a leader in Canada by initiating its own Senate electoral process.

Even though Ontario won’t have been the first province to have “Senator-In-Waiting elections, it will likely influence the remaining provinces and territories to follow suit.

Ontario, in its first Senate electoral process, should arrange for the choosing of at least 14 candidates. We need enough persons to fill the imminent vacancies of ten Senators

plus another four persons for standby in case of retirement, disablement, resignation or death.

In the past, the government appointed Senators from persons of property. Such persons likely were educated and possessed skills of great discernment. After all, a Senator must be literate enough to read and comprehend the proposed legislation sent from the Commons.

Most of our forefathers at the time of Confederation were not very literate, so we had to rely on the government's ability to identify and appoint the best and most qualified persons to fulfill such an important role. Due to party politics, modern appointments appear to be based on a patronage reward system rather than based on merit and good stewardship talent.

In today's society, the majority of persons aged 24 to 64 inclusive have some form of post secondary education suggesting that, in the whole, most Ontarians in the 21st century are literate and quite capable of sound judgment. Ontarians can choose their Senators from amongst their peers.

We do not need patronage appointments. We need commitment and talent.

Let's choose our own leadership. Let's support the petition to have elections for "Senators-In-Waiting"