

Electoral System Reform in Quebec

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Issue was first raised in 1970 by the Parti Québécois, then a third-party born 2 years earlier.

Liberal government chose instead to focus on malapportionment and to stick with FPTP.

1976: Parti Québécois won office.

Two attempts were made to reform the electoral system (1978-9) (1982-4)

In 1978: 3 options, all rejected by Cabinet and caucus

Publication of a Green Paper (1979)

Second try in 1982-84

« Regional PR » selected as preferred system

Rejected by Cabinet and caucus

1983: Issue referred to Electoral Boundaries Commission, for public hearings

1984: Commission recommended Regional PR

Cabinet, caucus and Liberal opposition killed the proposal.

Issue vanished from public debate 1984 to 1998.

Debate re-ignited by outcome of 1998 election: Liberals lost 48-76 seats while leading in the popular vote

PQ postponed electoral system reform to after sovereignty (2000)

Electoral system reform gained new supporters:

- Some Liberals
- Mario Dumont's ADQ party
- The Left

2002: Parliamentary committee heard 4 experts, all supporting MMP

2002-03: The « États généraux »

Regional hearings held, Fall 2002

« États généraux » (800 people) in February 2003: Mixed system supported by 65% of participants; 25% for Regional PR

Béland committee instead recommended Regional PR (March 2003)

General Election 2003: Liberals win office.

- Reform promised in Throne Speech (May 03), to be passed within 2 years
- MMP selected as preferred option
- Proposal scheduled to be tabled in June 2004 – Postponed to the Fall
- Draft Bill tabled in December 2004 « for public debate »
- Creation of a Special Committee including MLAs, + 8 « citizens » chosen by lot from among 2500 applicants.

Committee heard experts and held regional hearings (2005-6)

2 different reports:

- « Citizens' report »: a small-party friendlier MMP
- MLAs report: Endorses MMP « in principle »

No referendum will be held

A Bill might be tabled

How the proposed system would work

Région des Laurentides, 2003 Election
3 ridings, + 2 list seats, total 5.

	% of vote	Ridings		List		Total
LIB.	38,8%	1	+	1	=	2
P.Q.	38,1%	2	+	0	=	2
A.D.Q.	20,3%	0	+	1	=	1
Autres	2,8%	0	+	0	=	0 .
Total	100,0%	3	+	2	=	5 .