

Farming different in Alberta

by Jamie Harrison

A 17-year-old farm girl from Alberta says that farming near a large city is vastly different than the type of farming she is accustomed to.

Collette Eleniak who hails from Lamont, Alberta, — a rural community about an hour outside of Edmonton — was in Halton Hills as the winner of a 4-H ten-day exchange program.

"Lots of things are different out here," Eleniak said, citing population, traffic, and land prices as the major differences.

"There is no way we'd be able to afford to have land (out here)," she said. "(In Alberta) a lot of farmers don't have large farms, and have to work another job to be able to afford it."

Eleniak said that despite the fact her family raises cattle and grow grain on their 48-acre farm, "(farming) is like a hobby for my dad" who works another job to help pay the bills.

Her trip to Ontario was sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada, which also offered exchanges to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Manitoba.

In the past Collette has taken part in exchanges to Quebec and Minnesota, as well as other parts of Alberta.

After a three day tour of southern Ontario's more famous attractions including Skydome for a Blue Jays game, a night at The Phantom Of The Opera, and a visit to the CN Tower, Eleniak, arrived at the home of Phyllis Moffat in Norval.

Moffat, the Ontario 4-H Counsel Director, has hosted students from

across Canada for the last ten years, keeping in touch with most of them after they've returned home.

Eleniak is the oldest of four children who along with her parents are all members of 4-H. She said her involvement with 4-H has been beneficial to her development as a student and a farmer, helping her



Collette Eleniak

with public speaking and non-agricultural related activities.

After she gets home and gets caught up on some rest, Eleniak plans to tell her fellow 4-H members about her trip to Halton, and just how different it was from her previous trips.

"I'm really glad that I was in 4-H," Eleniak said, adding, "it helps you make really good friendships."

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Parliament Hill report

Garth Turner, MP
Halton-Peel

Some days ago, the premiers of nine provinces came to an agreement on how the Constitution should be changed. To just about everybody's surprise, Ontario premier Bob Rae did an 11th-hour flip-flop, and agreed to a Triple-E Senate.

So, before we decide or disagree with him, what does Triple-E mean?

The first E: This stands for Elected. Right now, the country's 108 senators are appointed by the prime minister — recently from lists of people submitted by the provinces. This unelected senate has the power to overturn laws passed by the elected House of Commons — and that's not how democracy is supposed to work.

So, if we're going to have a senate (personally, I'd rather not), then it had better be elected.

The second E: It means Effective. The idea is, if we elect people to a new senate, then they should have the power to do something. Under the most recent proposal, the senators would be able to defeat House of Commons laws on a sliding basis.

That is, if half of them voted against a law dealing with natural resources, it would die. If 70 per cent of the senators voted against any other kind of law passed by the Commons, then it, too, would be dead. If 60 per cent voted against, then there would be a joint sitting with the House of Commons, where almost 400 of us would vote again.

If this sounds complex and confusing, you have caught right on. It is.

The final E. This is the controversial one, and it stands for Equal.

Right now, the Senate is made up of differing numbers of senators from each province. Ontario and Quebec, which contain over half the population of Canada, have 24 seats each. Little P.E.I. has four, Saskatchewan six and New Brunswick ten.

The Triple-E model would give each province the same number of Senators — eight. The idea behind this is that the Senate should not reflect the basis of democracy, which is representation-by-population, but rather give more power to the "regions" — which means anything that isn't Ontario and Quebec.

Suddenly, Ontario's share of the Senate would drop by more than half. Over 60 per cent of the power in the Senate would be given to provinces representing just 15 per cent of the Canadian population. This means that when people in P.E.I. went to the polls to vote for senators, their votes would carry 74 times more weight than voters in Halton-Peel.

Each P.E.I. senator would represent the interests of about 17,000 people, while each Ontario senator would represent 1,250,000 people. This is equal?

Those who want the Triple-E Senate, in my view, are trying to hoodwink us into believing that all the provinces are equal, while they are not. Provinces like P.E.I., New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are based on a Canada which existed 125 years ago, when Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) where just a fraction of the size they are today.

I think a better model is this: Make the last E mean Equitable — have equal power given to five regions in this country — Maritime, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, B.C. and the Territories. They would be more balanced in terms of economies, populations and national influence. That way the smaller provinces would wield more clout than today, but the fundamentals of democracy would not be smashed.

By the way, the premiers also agreed on almost 20 more MPs in the House of Commons, plus those 80 new, elected senators.

I don't know about you, but in my opinion, the last thing this country needs is 100 more federal politicians. Let's have less government in Canada, not more!



Andy Voelker, manager of Wendy's Georgetown for 4 1/2 years turns over the keys to Leona Poot who will manage the local outlet. Andy is going on to manage Wendy's Brampton location at Main St. and Volden Dr.