

OPINION

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Do your duty

When the polls open across Ontario on Wednesday (Oct. 10) more than four out of every 10 registered voters will not cast a ballot.

Roughly translated, that means about 3.5-million Ontarians will not exercise their democratic right to vote.

While it's a shame, it's hardly surprising. Neither of the last two provincial elections could motivate even 60 per cent of us to get out and help choose the next provincial government.

It's virtually impossible to pinpoint what—or who—is to blame for this apathy.

Perhaps some of us have become so cynical of politicians and the political process that we opt to tune it all out.

Or maybe the downward trend is symptomatic of our home and work lives becoming so unbelievably busy that some of us find we have no time or energy left over to cast an educated vote.

Only once in the last 30 years has provincial voter turnout even come close to attaining 65 per cent. This happened during the great protest vote of 1990 when the Bob Rae-led New Democratic Party steamrolled its way to 74 of a possible 130 seats, leaving the Liberals and Conservatives in their dust. That year 64.4 per cent of us made our voices heard.

While this year's election is shaping up to be a Liberal/Conservative showdown there's been no indication that even a 60 per cent turnout is likely.

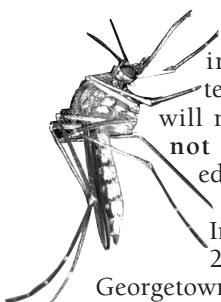
It will be interesting to see if Wednesday's referendum to decide the future of the province's electoral process will have any bearing on how many people decide to vote.

While the optimist may view the chance to decide the way we fill the provincial legislature as an extra incentive to head to the polls, the pessimist may conclude the whole MMP issue is confusing, frustrating and one more reason to stay away.

While casting your two votes on Wednesday won't change Ontario overnight, not voting guarantees that you will have had no influence on what happens in this province after Oct. 10.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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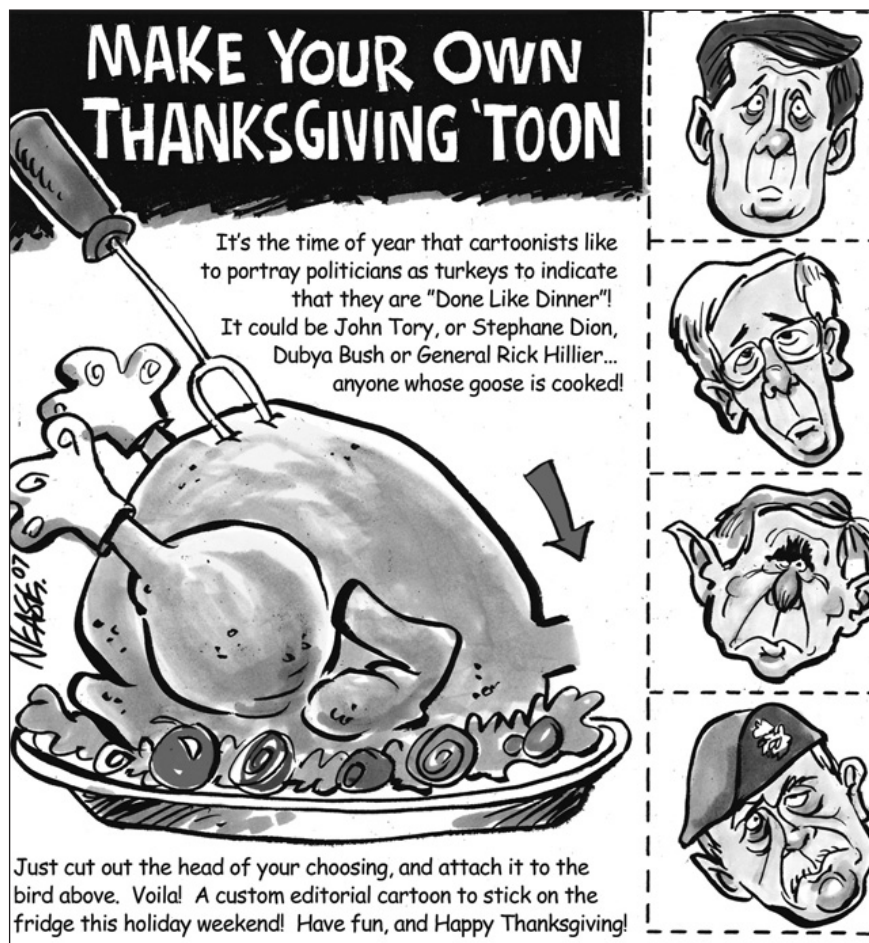
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Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MMP = Make More Politicians, says reader

Dear editor,
I will be voting against the referendum question regarding MMP (true meaning Make More Politicians).

I do not agree with appointed politicians to represent our community. Our politicians should be voted in by the community at large and from our community.

"Fringe" parties completely frighten me. We have seen in Europe as many as 20 parties on one voting card. The electorate now is having problems with four or five candidates. Let us not forget about the number of lawn signs. In Italy you have a new government every 10 months and even an elected pornography starlet from the fringe party system.

In Belgium it has been close to a year without a working government

Greens and NDP aren't 'unappealing'

Dear editor,
Your Oct. 3 editorial states, "Martin Lavictoire (Green), Noel Duignan (NDP) and Giuseppe Gori (Family Coalition Party) offer the same unappealing ideas we have heard before from their parties."

I fail to understand why you label the NDP and Green platforms "unappealing". As I write, our temperature is 10 degrees warmer than average and our region is suffering a shortage of rainfall, verging on drought. The Green Party is the only one that "gets" the severity of our ecological

since the different parties cannot agree on a coalition. In The Netherlands there is a fringe party that is pro-pedophilia!

Does this mean that the "first-past-the-post" system is perfect? No, it is not.

If we want candidates to have more than 50 per cent of the vote then why not do what we currently do for political party leadership and candidate races? The least amount of votes gathered by a candidate means that candidate is dropped from the race and we vote again until one candidate has more than 50 per cent, plus one vote.

Granted, this will take more time and a lot more money. We also cannot forget this could create more voter apathy.

However, MMP will just create

crisis and has policies that begin to address it. Traditionally, the NDP is there to speak for ordinary working families and the disadvantaged. What is so "unappealing" about a \$10 minimum wage?

"Unappealing" perhaps to comfy citizens who have bought into the status quo, but worth a close look by an increasing number of us who care about the fate of the Earth and the growing gap in the numbers between "haves" and "have nots".

Joan Cornfield,
Georgetown

more politicians who will not be from our own riding but probably from Toronto, and we already see how much Torontonians care about our region.

These are just some of the reasons I will vote for "first-past-the-post" and against MMP in the upcoming referendum.

Peter Jonkman, Georgetown

Taxpayers can't afford MMP

Dear editor,
With all the discussion about the mixed-member proportional (MMP) referendum vote, not much has been mentioned about the cost to Ontario taxpayers if the proposal is approved.

Going from 107 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) to 129 will result in 22 additional MPPs' salaries, 22 additional pensions, additional Queen's Park offices, assistants, assistants' offices, home riding offices and all the benefits that go with the jobs, at a cost of millions of dollars to Ontario taxpayers.

The underlying philosophy of MMP has much merit, but the specific system proposed this time, in the current referendum, in my view is much too expensive as compared to the potential benefits we may derive from it.

Peter Scholz, Limehouse

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