ELECTORS AND THEIR MNAS

WHAT WOULD NOT CHANGE UNDER THE PROPOSED ELECTORAL SYSTEM (MIXED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION)

In a division, electors would vote for the candidate of their choosing. To get elected in a division, a candidate would have to receive a plurality of the votes, as is the case now.

The presence in the National Assembly of two "types" of MNAs, one elected in a division and another in a district, would not essentially alter their role, which would still be:

- to represent the public and to act in the interest of the citizens who elected them;
- to enact laws;
- to monitor the activities of the government and the public administration;
- to engage in public debate on political issues that affect Québec society as a whole.

MNAs, be they division or district MNAs, would continue to represent all citizens. They could hold parliamentary or departmental offices irrespective of the way they were elected.

The coexistence of these two types of MNA on the same territories (division and district) would tend to change certain ways of doing things, among electors and MNAs alike.

CHANGES FROM THE ELECTORATE'S STANDPOINT

Each vote would count in two ways.

An elector would still vote for a division candidate, but the same vote could, through the compensation mechanism, elect a candidate from the same party at the district level.

Citizens could deal with either the MNA for their division or the one for their district, whichever one they feel would better act on their behalf or better reflect their convictions. This is one direct benefit of mixed proportional representation: it diversifies political representation on a regional basis.

CHANGES FROM THE MNAS' STANDPOINT

Elected representatives should develop official or unofficial ways of acting on behalf of their fellow citizens. Any constituent would quite legitimately be able to deal with the MNA of his or her choosing. This situation is not wholly new. At present, many constituents will freely go to another MNA from their region or from another party to get their problems dealt with. When solicited in this way, the MNA may inform the constituents’ MNA or ask the constituents to take the matter to their own representative.
MNAs already support their constituents in dealings with ministers or influential colleagues, according to the responsibilities or areas of interest of these people, and even though they may not belong to the same party. They also sometimes compete with their colleagues, including those of their own party, on matters that affect their constituency or region.

Finally, with larger divisions and districts composed of two, three, or four divisions, MNAs would have the resources they need to provide a meaningful presence and effective follow-up of local and regional matters.

Quite likely, division and district MNAs would represent opposing parties. So less partisan ways of working would have to be developed in the public interest.

Some aspects of internal caucus life would be enriched by the effects of mixed proportional representation. For example, the caucuses of parties in the National Assembly would better represent all of Québec's regions. Regional MNAs would assume the duties of regional ministers and the duties of MNAs who currently defend the interests of divisions held by other parties.