

What not a price for not voting?

SHORT EDITORIAL

ACROSS THE PROVINCE, there likely wasn't a single municipality where a majority of the eligible voters bothered to exercise their franchise.

Even in the Town of Mono, where the introduction of electronic voting meant that the town's 7,500 eligible voters could make their selections without leaving their homes (by computer or phone), just 32.8 per cent of those on the voters' list bothered to vote.

Although that was better than the 26 per cent turnout four years ago, it was nothing to cheer about.

A check with Fred Simpson, who supervised the election as the town's deputy clerk, showed that poor turnouts were common even in the days when Mono was a township, with the best turnout occurring in 2010 when Laura Ryan edged out the incumbent, Lorie Haddock, for the mayoralty.

The solution adopted in Australia in 1912 was to impose a \$20 fine for anyone who failed to vote at a federal election without a valid and sufficient reason.

That's a bit short of compulsory voting, but it has had a major impact on turnouts, which now are above 90 per cent.