

The political process

by BRIAN LOCKHART

As of this writing I have no idea who won the federal election.

The election doesn't happen until tomorrow in current time.

It could be a majority, a minority, or maybe the entire country issued a protest vote after forgetting to check with everyone else and voted in the Yellow Banana Peel party by accident.

It doesn't matter. At the end of the day we get the government we voted for ? well, at least some of us do.

The usual number of people won't bother to cast a vote because going to a polling station and putting an 'X' in a little circle is apparently too much work.

Others use the excuse 'there's no one worth voting for.'

However, that excuse simply doesn't fly. Of course there are people worth voting for.

All the candidates I've met so far, from several different ridings and parties, have been pretty decent people and seem to have a real interest in doing what they think is right.

We should appreciate the fact that people step up and run for office. I have always admired candidates from the less popular parties who have no chance of winning, yet still take on the challenge and run for election. They are participating in the process.

Whether anyone appreciates it or not, being a Member of Parliament is a tough job. It is time demanding and takes you away from your family on a regular basis. It's also a job that may or may not have security.

No matter who formed this current government, the complaining from those who voted the other way will commence.

Yes, you can complain all you want. However, having an elected government is still far better than the way it is done in some countries where having a change in government means the current leader is suddenly dispatched and you're told someone new is in charge while having a gun pointed at your head.

No matter who controls the House of Commons after this election, this is still a democracy where your vote should count whether the person you voted for was elected or not.

An MP is supposed to represent all the constituents in a riding, not just the ones that voted for them or those that declare their allegiance to a particular party agenda or strategy.

Although there would be no way of knowing who voted for whom, unless you make it known publicly.

Even if your candidate was not elected, it doesn't mean you are exempt from being part of the political process.

Over the coming months and years, whoever gets into power is going to make some announcements that will not be in your favour or best interest.

Unfortunately, governments have a tendency to create legislation whether the public wants it or has voiced an opinion against it. If

the party decides it is good, then the rest of us have to live with it.

Or do we?

There are times when you can make your voice known ? especially when the guys and gals in parliament decide a new tax on widgets will benefit those who drive yellow cars or some other nonsense they quite often come up with. These type of tax hikes may benefit a handful of yellow car owners, but the rest of us who use widgets on a daily basis will once again feel the pain in our bank account.

Your Member of Parliament has an office for a reason. They also have a telephone, email, and usually a drop-in policy. That office is your pipeline to express your opinion.

Most people have very little interaction with their elected federal representative. Unless you are in a business involved in foreign trade or attend the right kind of events, you probably never cross paths.

If you really are opposed to a policy that a government is going to enact, you have the option of contacting your local Member of Parliament and letting them know. If it is really unpopular, and a lot of people picked up a telephone or sent an email, it will get noticed.

The last thing a politician wants to see is several thousand complaints regarding proposed legislation cross their desk. Multiply those complaints with the same numbers across the 338 ridings across the country and a government will sit up and take notice.

Whether you were happy with the results of Monday's election or not, you still have a voice in the government that runs this country.