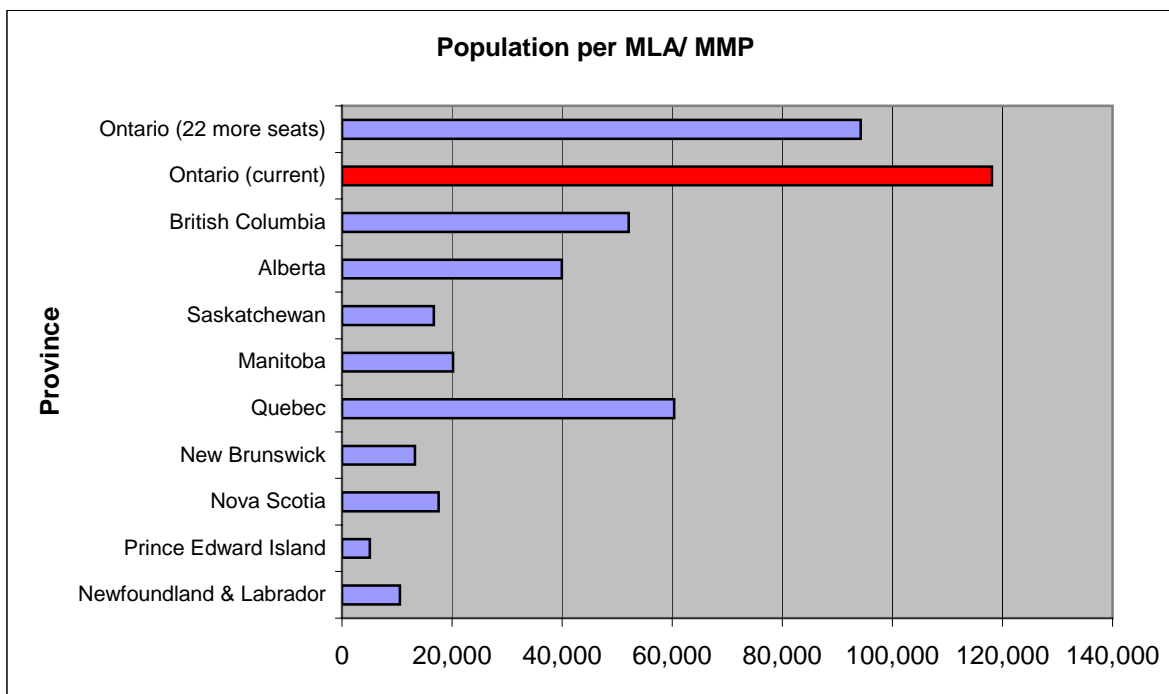


Why do we need more politicians?

Just mention the word “politician” and associations with a “used car salesman” seem to pop into people’s minds. To tell them we need more politicians can produce an immediate reaction of dismay. But is it really our politicians we should blame? Our **first-past-the-post, adversarial system** is partly at fault.

By changing our system to one that is more proportional, as recommended by the **Ontario Citizen’s Assembly**, we may be changing not only how our politicians work together but we will likely get more of the type of politician we want. Proportional representation systems usually elect **more women and minority groups** through additional at-large members who are chosen from lists. With more representatives in the legislature that mirror who we are, there is a greater chance that we will get laws that reflect our needs.

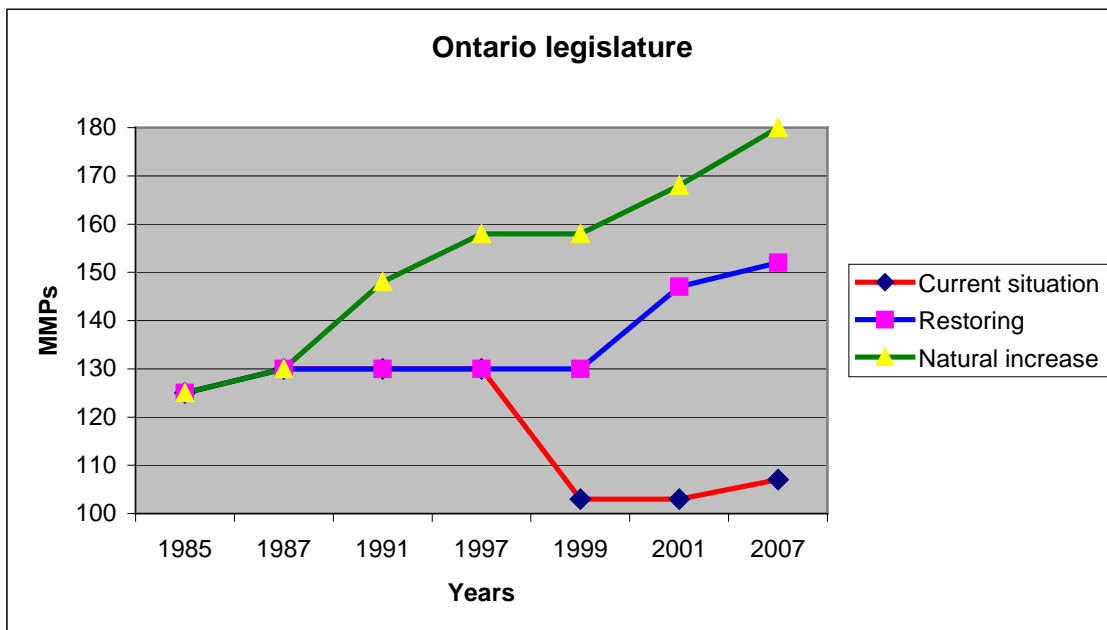
Strange as it may sound, the reduction in size of our legislature a few years ago from 135 to 103 seats did not save us money. More staff had to be hired to compensate for the reduced MPPs and studies have shown that issues are still slipping through the cracks. Professor David Docherty, speaking at the assembly, said 150 even 180 seats would not be out of line with other jurisdictions.



In Ontario we have a larger population per representative than any other province. If we had the same proportion of seats as our next-door neighbor in Quebec, we would have **over 200 seats!**

The Ontario Citizen's Assembly also heard from Prof. David Docherty that the reduction in members actually made the government less accountable and less efficient. Good fiscal accountability and effective watchdogging of the government's \$87 billion budget requires reasonably large opposition caucuses.

To hold the government accountable, opposition parties should ideally have a dedicated critic for each ministry or portfolio, plus enough MPPs for adequate representation on committees. Prof. Docherty convincingly showed that the cost for MPP salaries is miniscule compared with the benefits citizens will gain from better oversight of government and improved fiscal responsibility. Currently, government backbenchers are seriously outnumbered, as any backbench Liberal MPP will tell you: they can't staff committees well either.



The increase in members permits the election of at-large members which are more likely to be women and visible minorities. The cost of these 22 more MPPs is less than 80 cents/person/year. This is a small price to pay for democracy and for more women and minority representatives.

**Vote for MMP in the referendum on
October 10 for more women politicians!**