

Branches of Government



How the three branches of government
protect democracy and serve the needs of
Canadians

The Executive Branch



Enforcing the laws

Head of State



- ❧ Our head of state is the Queen (represented by the Governor General)
- ❧ Some responsibilities
 - ❧ Represent Canada internationally
 - ❧ Open Parliament
 - ❧ Give Royal Assent to bills so they can become a law
- ❧ This makes us a constitutional monarchy



Head of Government



- ❧ The leader of the governing party (party elected to the most seats in the House of Commons)
 - ❧ Known as the Prime Minister
 - ❧ In the United States the head of state and the head of government are the same person (President)





Cabinet



- ❧ Ministers responsible for helping to enforce the laws by having specific portfolios (responsibilities)
 - ❧ Usually come from the House of Commons (relates to the idea of responsible government, because the executive branch must be responsible to the legislative branch and the legislative branch is responsible to us)
 - ❧ It doesn't mean they are actually behaving responsibly 😊
 - ❧ In the United States members of the cabinet CANNOT be part of the legislative branch – known as separation of powers.
- ❧ Cabinet ministers have staff that work to help the executive branch enforce the laws, they are known as civil servants

Governor General
(head of state)

Executive

Prime Minister
(head of government)
Cabinet

Legislative

House of Commons
Senate
Parliament

Judicial

Supreme Court
Lower Courts

Executive

President
(head of state and government)
Cabinet (Staff)

Legislative

House of Representatives Senate

Congress

Judicial

Supreme Court
Lower Courts



The Legislative Branch



Creating the laws

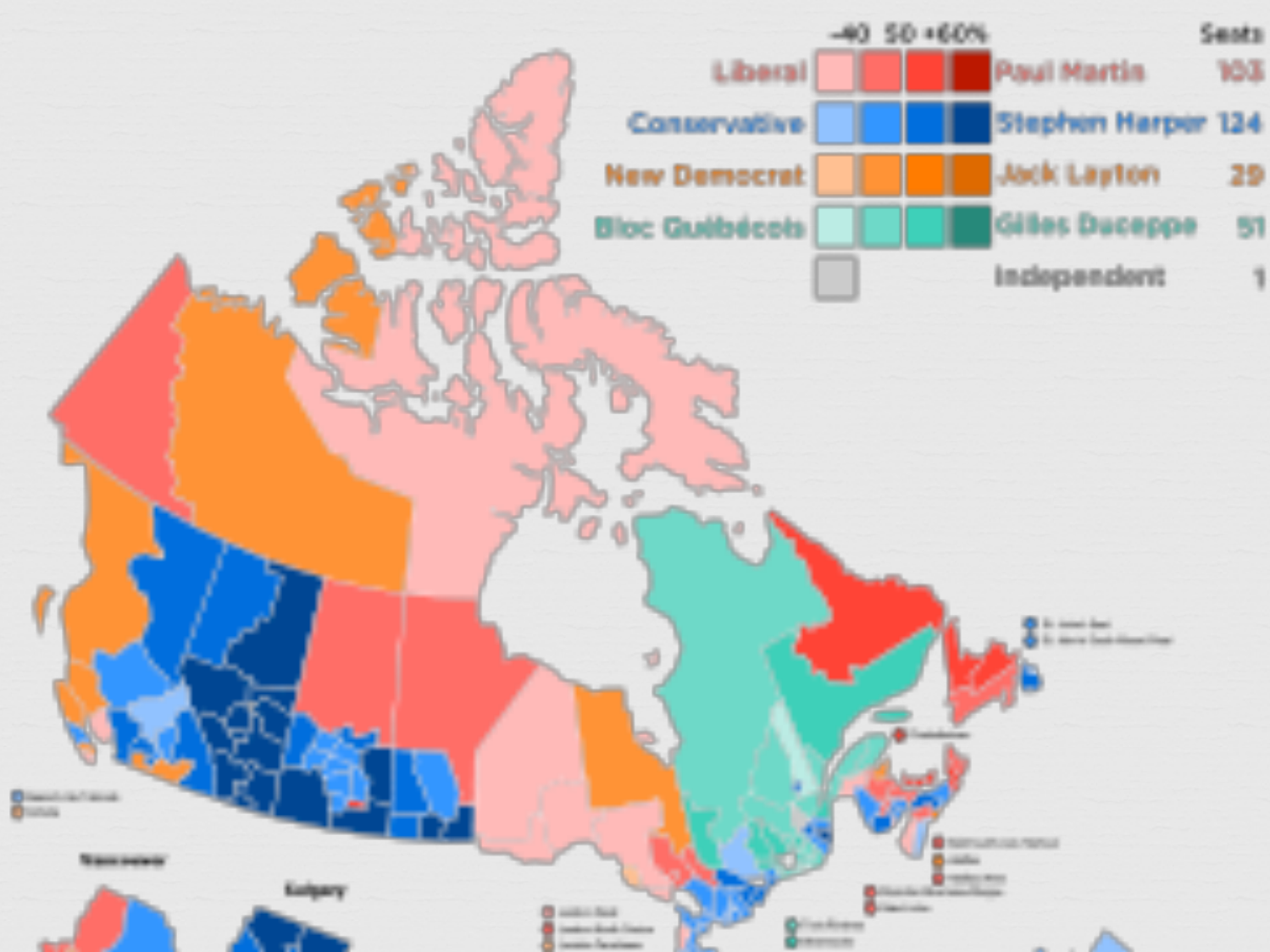
The Parliament



House of Commons



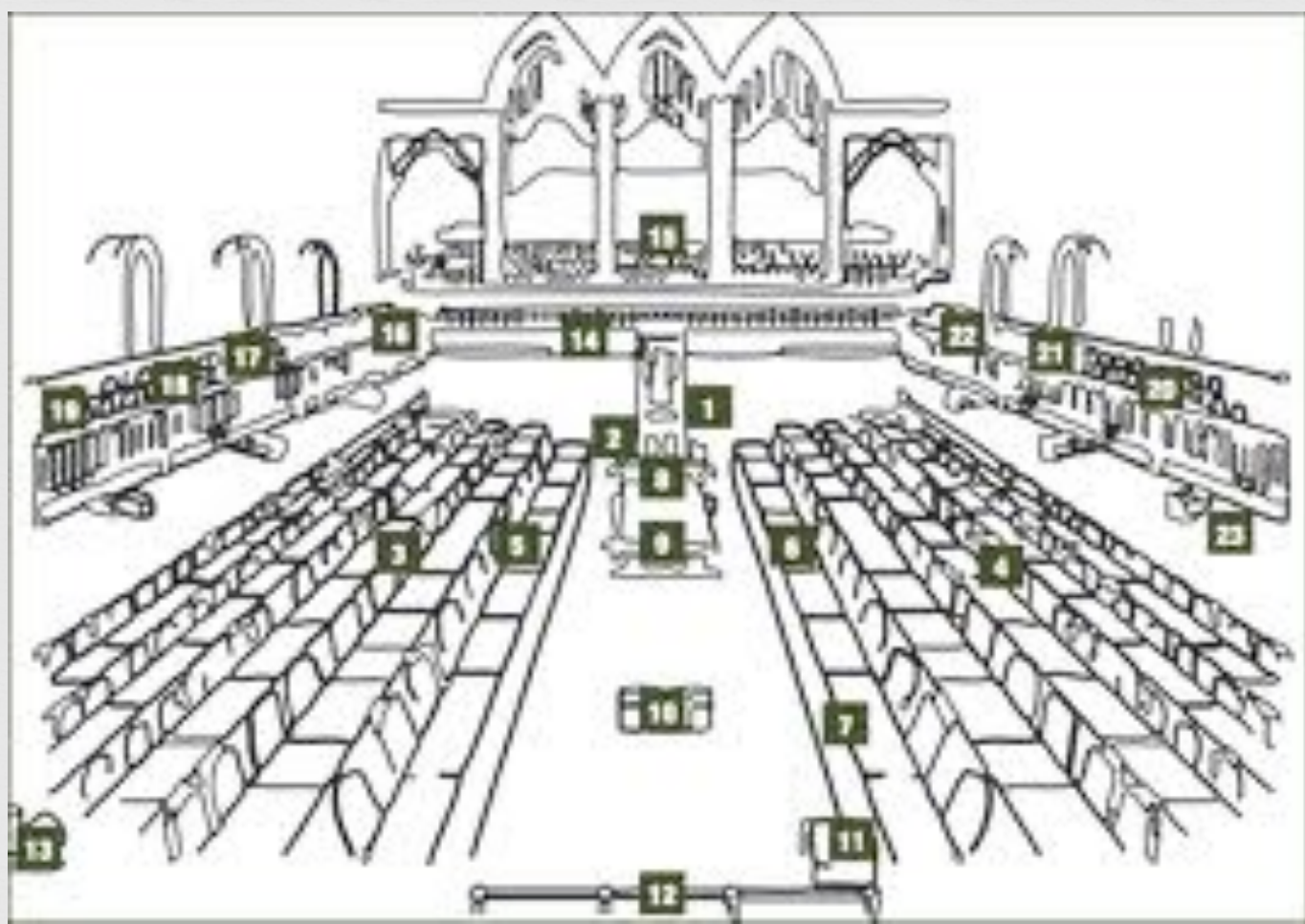
- ✧ Also known as the lower house
- ✧ Number of seats in the House of Commons is based on the number of ridings or constituency
 - ✧ Ridings are based on population (representation by population)
- ✧ MPs (Members of Parliament who sit in the House of Commons) are responsible to the people living in their constituency (the area they represent), as well, MPs are responsible to their political party



	-40	50	+60%		Seats
Liberal				Paul Martin	103
Conservative				Stephen Harper	124
New Democrat				Jack Layton	29
Bloc Québécois				Gilles Duceppe	51
				Independent	1



- ❧ Where the MPs sit is based on which party won the election (which party has the most representatives)
- ❧ The party with the most representatives sits on the right hand side of the speaker
 - ❧ The second largest party sits right across from them and are known as the Official Opposition



ACTUAL RESULTS USING
SINGLE MEMBER PLURALITY



SEATS	% SEATS	SEAT DIFFERENCE
167	54.2%	+45
102	33.1%	+8
34	11%	-24
4	1.3%	-15
1	0.3%	-11
0	0%	
0	0%	



Senate



- ❧ The Upper House
- ❧ Based on region (instead of population)
 - ❧ Helps to balance the power away from Central Canada
 - ❧ Senators are responsible to their region as well as their party
- ❧ Appointed, 30 yrs old, \$4000 property, serve until 75
 - ❧ Want Senators to have a long term view of issues
 - ❧ Sober second thought
 - ❧ In the United States they are elected – what are the pros and cons of this?



Judicial Branch



Interpreting the laws

Independent Courts



- ❧ The judicial branch is independent of the legislative and executive branches.
 - ❧ This is important because it allows the judicial branch to interpret laws without being influenced by politicians.
- ❧ all laws must agree with the constitution, the judicial branch ensures that this happens
 - ❧ Any constitutional questions are looked at in the Supreme Court (this court looks at appeals or any cases that want to change the law, they **do not** try serious cases like serial killers)



- ❧ This group will make sure that everyone in Canada is treated fairly by looking at law
- ❧ E.g. when someone breaks the law the judicial branch will look at what the person did, look at the law and decide whether the law was broken, and then look at what punishments are to be given for breaking that law

Today's key terms



- œ Civil servant
- œ Constitution
- œ Executive branch
- œ Head of state
- œ Head of government
- œ House of Commons
- œ Independent courts
- œ Judicial branch
- œ Legislative branch
- œ Parliament
- œ Senate

Did I miss any?

ACTUAL RESULTS USING
SINGLE MEMBER PLURALITY

HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS USING
PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION



SEATS	% SEATS	SEAT DIFFERENCE	PARTY	% VOTE	SEATS
167	54.2%	+45	CON	39.6%	122
102	33.1%	+8	NDP	30.6%	94
34	11%	-24	LIB	18.9%	58
4	1.3%	-15	BLOC	6%	19
1	0.3%	-11	GRN	3.9%	12
0	0%		IND	0.4%	1
0	0%		OTH	0.5%	2

