

# The Interim

## PLUS + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

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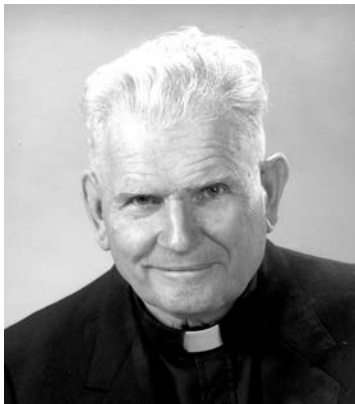
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### Father Ted Colleton Scholarship Reminder



The deadline for submissions of application and essay component is November 30, 2011. This early date has been chosen to give candidates a fair opportunity to participate and not to procrastinate. Please remind students and provide them with the pertinent details: topic and deadline.

To maximize participation by your students, you may wish to emulate other teachers who have made the essay topic part of their own classroom course writing assignments. This approach encourages the student to achieve two objectives with a single effort.

Back in May more than 15,000 Canadians met on Parliament Hill and then took their concerns through the streets of Ottawa in the annual national March for Life. Despite a clear message from the just re-elected Prime Minister that he did not wish to deal with the abortion issue in any way, the crowd was demonstrably larger than ever before. This fact in itself is an important sign of hope for the pro-life cause. Taking this as an example, candidates for the Father Ted Colleton Scholarship Program should be well-inspired to write on this year's topic: *Is there cause for pro-life hope regarding the abortion issue in Canada?*

Details regarding the scholarship program along with application form will be found at [www.theinterim.com](http://www.theinterim.com)

### Provincial Elections Across Canada

This fall is proving to be an exciting period across Canada as five provinces - P.E.I., Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador - and the Northwest Territory hold elections. The *Interim Plus* presents some curriculum ideas that may be useful for your lesson planning in a civics or history class dealing with current events.

Students and teachers interested in politics will most likely use the Internet to locate information on the local candidates,

the electoral system, party leaders and the platforms of the major political parties. However, the local print media should not be ignored, especially when considering its role in local election races.

### Lesson Plans for 1-2 week duration

Use Current Events to teach students how Elections Work in the Provinces and territories of Canada. The students will learn the terms associated with politics, electoral campaigns, party platforms, and the role of print and electronic media.

1. Have students brainstorm about words and phrases related to elections, for example, political terms, party labels (or have them complete a crossword puzzle featuring the terms and their definitions).
2. Here are some questions for students to consider:
  - a) What is the general meaning of "politics", and why is it often referred to as "the art of the possible"?
  - b) Have students write a short paragraph (4 sentences or so) outlining their own gut feeling about politics.
  - c) What do they think the role of government should be?
  - d) Does government at the provincial level do too much or too little?
  - e) How do socialism and capitalism differ in their approaches to economic production and the role of government in the economy?
  - f) Identify/list 3 important ways in which provincial governments actually influence the economy.
  - g) What are political parties? Are they essential to politics? Are they good for the political process or an obstacle to getting things done properly?
  - h) Where do you think most Canadians (or choose your province) fit on the political spectrum? Why?
  - i) What are "third parties"? Why did they come into being in provincial politics? Why do third parties have such a difficult time in gaining greater representation in government?
  - j) If you had power to change some aspects of our electoral system what changes would you make, and why?

3. Have them consider the election campaign and the issues presented by the parties and the media to the general public.
4. Via the use of a template like the one below have students identify the main issues of their respective provincial or territorial election. Divide the class into 5 groups and have each group track the provincial election campaign.
5. Have students scan their local newspaper online or hard copy, searching for articles related to the provincial election in their province.
6. Have them enter a one-sentence summary stating the issue identified in the template and the respective party's position for each issue.
7. Have them choose and then explain what they believe to be the most important issue in their provincial election.

**Note:**

Conservative parties in some provinces may go under another name, E.g. The Wildrose Party is a conservative provincial political party in Alberta

## Election Issues Tracking Chart

Issue	Liberals	Conservatives	NDP	Greens	OTHER
energy supplies					
health care/ medical services					
education					
provincial deficit HST Taxes					
Social services Housing Senior & Child care					
environment/ parks and recreation					

Issue	Liberals	Conservatives	NDP	Greens	OTHER
crime, policing, justice					
manufacturing and industry					
job creation /unemployment rate					
role of government					
transportation					
rural/urban divide/help for large cities					
immigration					
life issues, abortion					

The major newspapers and major television networks in each province would have web sites of some value. Other possible online resources to consult would include

[www.ontarionewswatch.com/](http://www.ontarionewswatch.com/)

[canadaonline.about.com/od/elections/Canadian\\_Elections.htm](http://canadaonline.about.com/od/elections/Canadian_Elections.htm)

[www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth&document=index&lang=e](http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth&document=index&lang=e)

[www.canadiansocialresearch.net/politics\\_prov\\_terr.htm#on](http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/politics_prov_terr.htm#on)

[www.realpac.ca/ontario-provincial-election/](http://www.realpac.ca/ontario-provincial-election/)

[www.elections.sk.ca/youth/classroomresources.html](http://www.elections.sk.ca/youth/classroomresources.html)

[www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth/lin&document=index&lang=e](http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth/lin&document=index&lang=e)

[www.campaignlifecoalition.com/index.php?p=Provincial](http://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/index.php?p=Provincial)

[www.realwomenca.com](http://www.realwomenca.com)

**Other assignments related to the election period**

**Political Cartoons**

Another excellent way to examine the issues and the candidates is to have students collect five cartoons from different sources and analyze each cartoon on the basis of

1. the election issue/news item presented in the cartoon
2. correct identification of the personalities involved
3. explaining the cartoonist's point of view
4. editorial stance of the cartoon source (newspaper or magazine)
5. the effectiveness of the cartoon in terms of clarity, originality, truthfulness and fairness.



**Video Recording the Candidates During the Election Cycle**

It has been noted over and over again that a representative democracy cannot function properly without an informed and active citizenry. Students can be activist in the best sense of the term by help to inform voters. They can become citizen journalists by video recording 'all-candidates' meetings, and then posting the video on You Tube or sending it to an organization like Campaign Life Coalition (jack@campaignlifecoalition.com) that has the capacity to collect and disseminate such videos as part of their efforts to educate the public on life issues in particular. In fact, students can become citizen-reporters by engaging in this exercise. This is an excellent activity and could be done through group or individual effort.

**Leadership and Candidates**

Oftentimes a party's success at the polls is very much re-

lated to the popularity or ability of the party leader. There are many factors of leadership to consider – age, personal style, intelligence, political smarts, speech-making, television image, experience, personal looks, etc. The strength or weakness of local candidates also plays a role in party electoral success. Have students consider the following questions:

1. What is more important in a leader, charisma or experience? Why?
2. Is this an important factor in your provincial election? Why or why not?
3. How do local candidates get selected?
4. Should local riding candidates live in the riding in which they are running?



**Campaign finances and Pressure Groups**

In order to wage an effective electoral campaign, parties need financial resources. There is some concern about the costs of elections, not just for the taxpayer, but also for the parties and individual candidates. If only the very wealthy can participate in the political arena then mass participation is impossible. So apathy can easily set in if the "game" is outside the scope of affordability of ordinary folks. These are some questions pertaining to this problem:

1. List some of the most important election expenses for political parties.
2. What are the major sources of election finances?
3. Who are the biggest individual donors? Which are the largest corporate donors?
4. Are there any controls on the amount of money that can be raised or the amount that can be spent, nationally or riding by riding?
5. Should individuals and groups be limited in the amount of money that each can contribute to a candidate's campaign?
6. Is it fair that large contributors like unions oblige their members to support a political party's campaign even if they disagree? Example of OECTA in the Ontario election.
7. List several other pressure groups or special interest groups and briefly describe how they try to influence the election outcome.
8. What forms of lobbying should be permitted and which should be prohibited?



### Media Coverage

Complaints abound on the topic of media coverage of elections. Students need to understand and appreciate the role of the various media in the democratic election process. The fact is that the traditional television and print media no longer enjoy a monopoly as authoritative sources of news or commentary. Here are some questions on the role of media in election campaigns.

1. How is public opinion formed about leaders and parties? Ads? Interviews? Blogs? Newspaper columns?
2. Is print and electronic media influence on the political process overblown? Why or why not?
3. Assign students to watch the leaders' debate, assess the leaders' performances during the debate, compare media reports on the debate.
4. Analyze CBC, CTV, and Sun News Media approach to election campaign coverage.
5. Do the various media show any bias in their reporting of campaign events?
6. Does the news media report the news or create the news?
7. What role does internet social media play? Is the importance of social media exaggerated?



CBCtelevision



GlobalTV

### Social Unrest?

During the summer there were some momentous occurrences on the world scene, like the wanton massacre of young people in Norway, the ongoing disturbances in the Mid-

dle East and North Africa, the riots and looting in London and other English cities, and the debt ceiling crisis in the United States and in countries of the European Economic Community. These events, even if not yet settled, certainly demonstrate the fragility of civilization and the depth of individual human depravity. Violence begs questions to be asked. The British rioting stimulated much newspaper analysis and lots of calls on radio talk shows. Some Canadian observers drew comparisons to the Vancouver hockey playoffs riots and the G20 riots in Toronto.

The English situation spurred reflection on the nature of modern western society and what has gone wrong. An interesting article on the subject appeared in the *Toronto Sun* on August 25. In his article **Wrath of the welfare state**, John Robson, opined that the real concern should not be the riots themselves but rather the four decades of “social and economic dislocation that led to them”. Robson traces the problem to the onset and expansion of the welfare state and three specific developments which he associates with that: sluggish economies causing youth unemployment; collapse of families; and the disintegration of public order. In his conclusion Robson ties it together in this way:

*Welfare doesn't just burn down cities. It blights the lives of recipients. By relieving them of responsibility, it unfits them to cope and makes them a burden or a menace to those around them and a misery to themselves. In a final, bitter*



Above: Police officers wearing riot gear stand in front of a burning building in Tottenham, north London August 7, 2011.

Below: Crowds attacked riot police and set two squad cars alight.

Photos and caption courtesy of Totally Cool Pix. [totallycoolpix.com/2011/08/the-london-riots/](http://totallycoolpix.com/2011/08/the-london-riots/)



*paradox, the welfare state waged war on every tradition of decency in the name of inclusion. But in the end no one is included. Not the rioters condemned to spend their lives in a squalid stupor nor the rest of us threatened by them.*

*Odd, isn't it, how mobs burning down a once-great city suddenly make you notice that pattern.*

The article in its entirety may be found at [www.torontosun.com/2011/08/24/wrath-of-the-welfare-state](http://www.torontosun.com/2011/08/24/wrath-of-the-welfare-state)

### Questions

1. According to Robson how does too much government sap the responsibility of individuals?
2. Is single motherhood a symptom of family collapse or a cause for its collapse?
3. What facts and comments lead Robson to refer to the British situation as an “intergenerational catastrophe”?
4. Is there any cause for concern in Canada about youth restlessness that could explode into street violence?
5. Were the G20 riots Toronto, June 2010 and the Vancouver riots in May 2011 comparable to the British riots? Compare and contrast the three events as to
  - a) ostensible cause(s)
  - b) extent and duration
  - c) police reaction
  - d) media coverage
  - e) impact on their respective communities

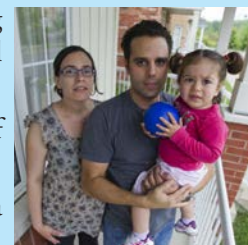
[www.cg.cfpsa.ca/cg-pc/NorthBay/EN/FamilyServices/ChildCare/PublishingImages/Child-care.jpg](http://www.cg.cfpsa.ca/cg-pc/NorthBay/EN/FamilyServices/ChildCare/PublishingImages/Child-care.jpg)

[www.parentcentral.ca/parent/articlePrint/1010287](http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/articlePrint/1010287)



### Questions

1. Is the lack of day care creating undue pressures leading to small families?
2. Is the lack of day care a cause of abortion?
3. Whose responsibility is it to raise a child? The parents or the state?
4. How do tax policies affect the availability of day care?
5. Wouldn't a better child tax credit give parents the choice?
6. Make a list of some of the other questions and issues that are relevant to the issue of economic consequences of child rearing and indirectly – to child bearing.
7. Is concern over affordable child care only a large city phenomenon given the concentration of jobs and population in big cities?
8. For a frightening report on a specific child care center have students read another *Toronto Star* article written by Laurie Monsebraaten ([www.thestar.com/news/article/1048956--markham-daycare-shut-down-after-toddlers-escape](http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1048956--markham-daycare-shut-down-after-toddlers-escape)).



### Child Care

In a June 17 article in the *Toronto Star*, Laurie Monsebraaten told of how mothers cry out for affordable, high-quality child care, and the difficulty they encounter in raising children without such assistance from the government. She pointed out that the critical factors to be considered by parents seeking child care are quality, location and cost; but, there are insufficient spaces and hence long waiting lists. The whole process in finding such child care services is apparently quite stressful for parents.

Two dozen non-profit agencies including the YWCA, Campaign 2000 and the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care, according to the article, were urging municipal, provincial and federal governments to build a comprehensive system of regulated, high-quality, affordable care. A common refrain was that the high cost of regulated care is leading many middle-class families to use “unregulated babysitting or teaming up with other mothers to hire nannies”.

Availability of child care is likely to be an important election issue for some people with 68 per cent of Ontario mothers whose youngest child is under age 3 being in the workforce, and that percentage jumps to 79 per cent for those whose youngest child is under age 5.

### Twisted Logic or Realism?

In an article titled “**Animal Rights and Abortion Dilemmas...**” Robert Cohen tries to make a case for realism in confronting unpleasant facts about the death of sentient beings. He draws comparisons between abortion as a form of murder to the slaughter of animals for food. He goes on to call the latter action also murder.

Here are some excerpts from the article to be found in its entirety at

[www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/ARandAbortionDilemmas.htm](http://www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/ARandAbortionDilemmas.htm)

*As an animal rights activist, I am faced with an enormous dilemma. Do I call abortion anything other than torture or murder? I cannot rationalize the willful delivery of pain to a rat, cat, dog, rabbit, calf, pig, circus elephant, or unborn humans when alternatives exist.*

*Is the killing of an animal against the law? Is murder against the law? People kill animals for food. As a vegan, I am offended by the process, but have never suggested that the killing be made illegal. I have urged that people take responsibility for their actions, and call the act what it is, murder, and recognize that their action of eating meat leads to the painful death of a sentient being.*

*In that same sense, I am horrified by every single act of abortion. I feel the pain of every woman who feels that she has no alternative, and must make that life or death decision. It is a decision that she lives with for the rest of her life, and nothing can be more painful than to kill a part of oneself. Abortion is murder. It must always be called murder. Although it immediately ends a pregnancy, it must not be called a pregnancy termination. It must be called what it is, and if that change in nomenclature occurs throughout our society, it might become a less common act than it is.*

*In the same sense that I would not prosecute a person who kills a living creature for food, I would not prosecute a woman who makes such a choice. Nor would I prosecute a physician who performs that terrible, terrible act of murder, just as I would not prosecute the butcher of a slaughterhouse or the owner of such an operation. I support every woman's right*

*to murder her fetus, and wish that no woman would ever do such a thing, but she must have the right, just as an individual must have the right to eat a chicken or a duck or a rabbit or a lamb or a veal calf.*

*As a society, we get into trouble by placing veils over controversial issues. We must look life and death squarely in the face and recognize each act for what it is and then take full responsibility for the things we do. If that ever happens, we will all live in a better world.*



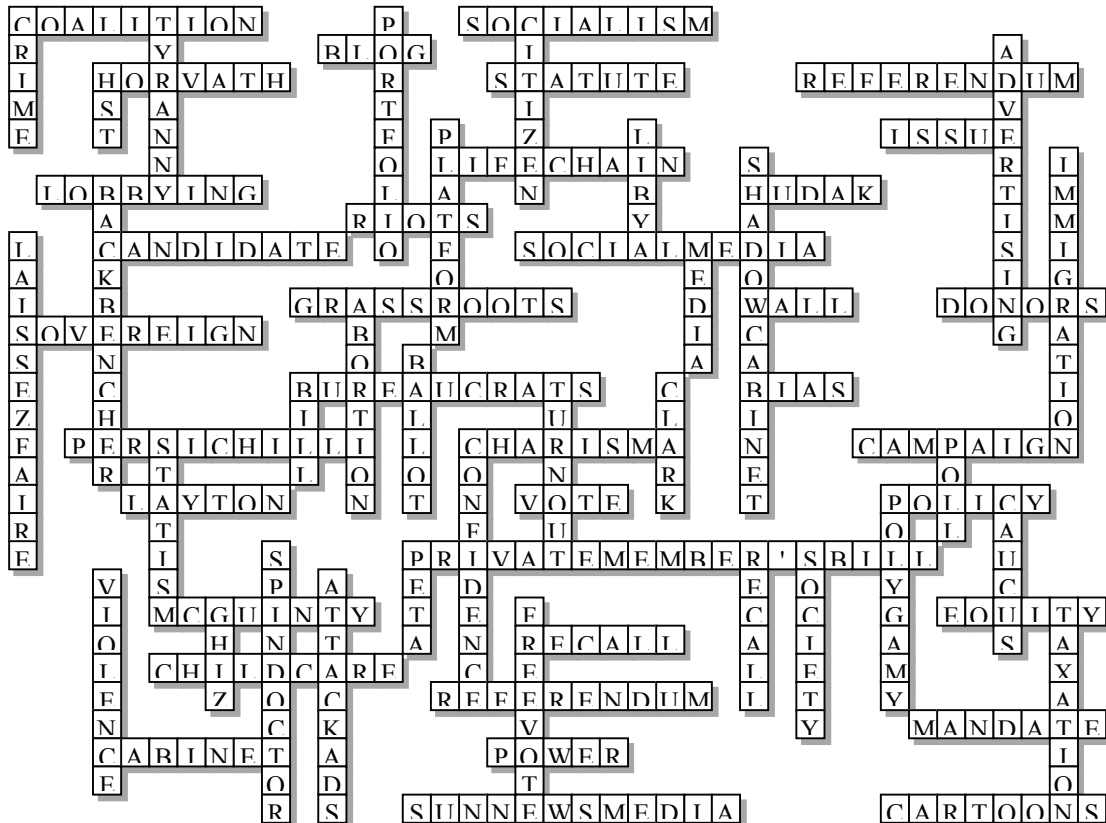
[www.freewebs.com/animal-rights/friends\\_not\\_food-s.jpg](http://www.freewebs.com/animal-rights/friends_not_food-s.jpg)

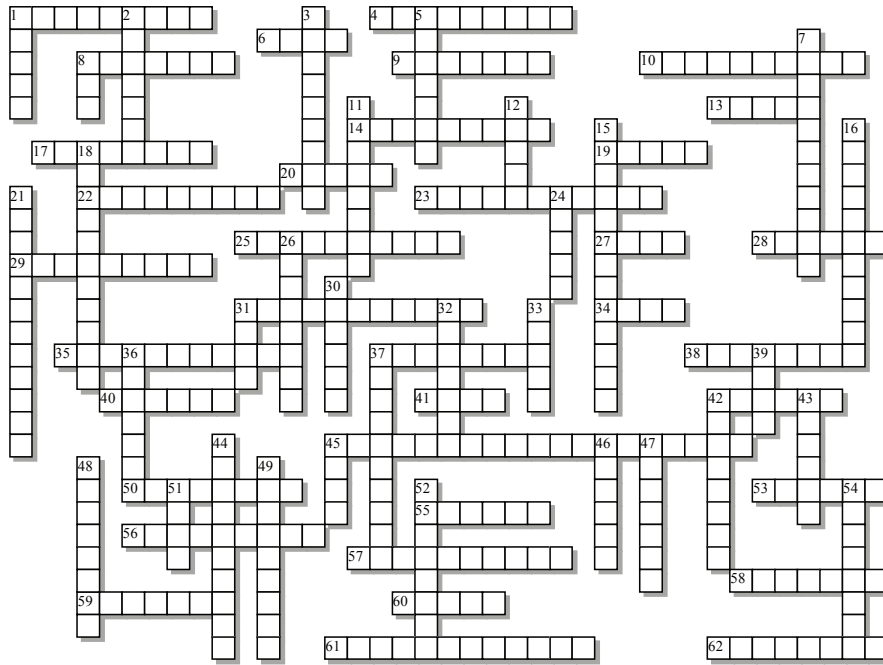
### Questions

1. Should there be a moral equivalence between human beings and animals on the basis of both being sentient beings?
2. Is the conclusion (essentially, all murder is fine, it's wrong but what the heck, that's the way it goes) justifiable?
3. Cohen's concluding paragraph hints at people taking responsibility. What does he mean?
4. Does this article advance our understanding or appreciation of the abortion issue in any way?
5. Is the reasoning found in this article suspect and if so on what basis?
6. Is Cohen reducing a serious ethical question to the absurd or does he have a legitimate point?

[www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/ARandAbortionDilemmas.htm](http://www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/ARandAbortionDilemmas.htm)

## Solution to crossword on p. 8





**Across:**

- 1 - An alliance between two or more political parties
- 4 - leftist ideology that prescribes a large role for government to intervene in society and the economy via taxation and public ownership.
- 6 - To write entries in, add material to, or maintain a weblog
- 8 - leader of NDP in Ontario
- 9 - A specific piece of legislation
- 10 - A decision on policy proposals by a direct vote of the electorate.
- 13 - an important public matter or policy of interest during an election
- 14 - public manifestation in support of the unborn
- 17 - An activity of interest groups aimed at influencing governors and the public to achieve a favourable policy decision(s).
- 19 - leader of Progressive Conservatives in Ontario
- 20 - public disorder on a massive scale
- 22 - A person nominated to represent a political party during an election
- 23 - tools for personal communications on widespread scale through internet
- 25 - arising from the local, natural, spontaneously
- 27 - premier of Saskatchewan
- 28 - contributors of finances to political campaigns
- 29 - The highest or supreme political authority.
- 31 - senior members of the civil service
- 34 - a decided favouring of one particular viewpoint
- 35 - newly appointed Director of Communications for PM Harper
- 37 - personal qualities of attraction in a leader
- 38 - An operation pursued to accomplish success in an election
- 40 - federal political leader who died in August
- 41 - A formal, legal expression of preference for a candidate for office or for a proposed resolution of an issue.
- 42 - A plan of a government or political party intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters
- 45 - Public bills introduced in the legislature by members who are not in the cabinet.
- 50 - leader of Liberal party in Ontario
- 53 - part of a controversial education policy
- 55 - The ability of voters in a constituency to remove their elected
- 56 - supervised babysitting service
- 57 - A decision on policy proposals by a direct vote of the electorate.
- 58 - A permission or authorization given by voters to the elected government
- 59 - A body of persons who head the executive departments of the government
- 60 - The ability to get other individuals to do as one wants them to do.
- 61 - new news network criticized as Fox News North
- 62 - visual representation of a person or concept

**Down:**

- 1 - illegal activity
  - 2 - A form of government in which one person rules arbitrarily.
  - 3 - The administrative responsibility carried by a minister, usually some combinations of departments and other agencies.
  - 5 - a legal resident of a nation qualified to vote
  - 7 - purchased exposure of views and messages
  - 8 - unpopular value-added tax
  - 11 - promises and main policies of a political party during an election campaign
  - 12 - country to which Canada sent fighter jets to protect civilians
  - 15 - The cohesive group of specialized critics in the official Opposition party.
  - 16 - orderly movement of people into a country
  - 18 - Member of Parliament on the govt. but not in cabinet, or those similarly distant from shadow cabinet posts in opposition parties.
  - 21 - the theory that government should not interfere in the direction of economic affairs
  - 24 - news reporting agencies, for example, television, radio, and the newspaper
  - 26 - an issue Party Leaders try to avoid
  - 30 - A sheet of paper or a card used to cast a vote
  - 31 - A piece of legislation under consideration by a legislative body.
  - 32 - number of eligible voters that actually voted in an election
  - 33 - current Premier of British Columbia
  - 36 - The heavy intervention of the state in societal affairs, especially in the economic system.
  - 37 - Support for the government by the majority of the members of parliament.
  - 39 - a methodical sounding of opinions regarding a public issue, policy, personality, popularity of a leader or government or voter intentions
  - 42 - practice of having more than one wife at the same time
  - 43 - A closed meeting of party members within a legislative body to decide on questions of policy or leadership
  - 44 - public relations person who publicizes a favorable interpretation of the words or actions of a political party
  - 45 - animal rights group
- representative from office by means of a petition.
- 47 - A self-sufficient group of individuals living together under common rules of conduct.
  - 48 - The utilization of physical force or power as a means of achieving ends.
  - 49 - aggressive, often simplistic messaging discrediting a political opponent
  - 51 - current Premier of Prince Edward Island
  - 52 - A legislative vote in which members are not required to follow the party line
  - 54 - government's power to take money legally from the populace