

## The Undecided Voter

*Ever since I became eligible to vote, I did so in every election. In the thirty years since, I have been a card-carrying member of a political party. I have met prime ministers, ministers, MP and councilors, in formal and informal sessions. I have met people aspiring to hold a seat in one of our legislative chambers; very partisan people and people who did not care about any political party and the role or actions of the government.*

*I believe in democracy and our political process and participates every step of the way. I have had direct influence on the candidate's name appearing on elections ballots and had my name on one ballot in 1991 municipal election. I have signed members for political parties, campaigned on behalf of persons seeking party nominations, and campaigned for candidates in general elections. I have been a candidate's scrutineer and an election poll clerk, to get a better understanding of "democracy at work."*

*Since my first vote, there have been countless polls referring to the "undecided voter." How does one become an "undecided voter?" I never understood the term and the disposition of any person in that category. Having thorough knowledge of the electoral process at the political party and general election levels, I could not sympathize with the "undecided voter." I never understood my friends' comments "Who are these people on the ballot?" as I always had a "say" on one name, before it made it to the ballot paper. I knew whom I was voting for many months before Election Day. My party's choice may not have been my personal choice; I would be voting for my party's choice, anyway.*

*Our personal lives, busy as it is, consumes most of our time, leaving little for involvement in politics and activities outside "normal living." We have so little time to learn and understand the political process, we leave ourselves at the mercy of the political "spin doctors." Hearing differing political views massaged into "truth" creates doubts in our minds. Partisans are unconvinced about the other parties' messages. The apathetic citizen, paying little or no attention to politics between elections, becomes the undecided voter, sometimes having a significant influence on the outcome of a general election. The non-voter, whose mantra is "they are all the same anyway," denies himself the opportunity to make changes he wants and lets others make the change for him. He can then continue to say "they are all the same anyway" becoming more ignorant of the control governments have over our life.*

*With the campaign underway, I have paid attention to the messages from all sides. None have an all-encompassing plan to resolve the ailments of our province. Our confrontational style of politics prevents government and the opposition cooperating for the betterment of the population. Not getting the best from all our MPP's makes us all losers. Too bad! We stumble like a drunkard towards the greatness that awaits our province. Living in Mississauga West for many years, do I "choose change" and vote for my party's choice?; look forward to the rocky "Road Ahead" or hope "Public Power" will give us a government that listens to, and work for, the betterment of everyone? They are not all the same. It is a tough choice; I may choose my party's choice, despite my misgivings about the candidate or I may make my decision as the pen is about to strike the ballot paper.*

*For the first time, I understand the "undecided voter"; I am now one. I will be voting; that is a certainty. It is my democratic right. I hope, you too, will vote.*

*Cecil Young*