



Record of Proceedings of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform February 21-22, 2004

Saturday, February 21, 2004 (AM Plenary Session)

In attendance: J. Blaney, Chair
158 Assembly members
9 staff
13 facilitators
30-35 observers
2-3 media

Absent: M. Anderson
A. Whitelaw-Dykes

Recording secretary: L. Perra

M. Jarbek, accompanied by pianist B. Carter, led the Assembly in the singing of the National Anthem.

Opening remarks

The Chair outlined a proposed agenda for the Prince George meeting:

- What we have learned from the public hearings
- What we have learned from the submissions
- What process should we follow for the deliberations phase

The Chair informed the Assembly that the Canadian Unity Council was interested in sponsoring three information evenings in different parts of the province on the work of the Assembly. Members from those areas would be invited to participate. The interest from across the country, and internationally continues to grow, as does the number of people from afar who attend the open sessions. The Chair expressed ongoing appreciation for the positive evaluations being received.

Question Period

There being no questions, the Chair invited K. Carty to proceed with the Learning session.

Presentation: Proportional Representation - Ken Carty

Following the presentation, questions on the following items were raised:

- Difficulty with the terms "tiers"
- Relationship between PR systems and majority governments
- Status of government during coalition development periods

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups.

PM Plenary Session

Public Hearings

Members were advised that their tent cards included a memo advising them of the public hearings they would attend. Individuals who had not been advised of a location had not submitted the form. If there was interest, efforts would be made to assign them to a site.

L. Perra described the process that was used to assign the locations. A random selection process was used to resolve conflicts when too many people had indicated a preference for the same location.

A brief outline of the process to be followed at the hearings was provided with a more comprehensive statement to be prepared for the next session. Also, the communications staff is working on a promotional program for the hearings and will share that at the next session. Members of the public from across the province are submitting requests to make presentations.

Members were advised that although they may not have been assigned to a specific meeting they could attend as a member of the public.

Presentation: Single Transferable Vote - C. Sharman

Questions on the following items were raised:

- Transfer value of extra votes
- Counting of party and candidate votes
- Comparability of demographics of other regions to British Columbia's

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups.

Plenary Session—Interactive Simulation of Voting Models

K. Carty and C. Sharman

Following the presentation questions were raised on the following:

- Requirements for becoming a political party in BC
- Differences between open and closed lists
- Which has the higher proportionality in 1st tier versus 2nd tier?
- District magnitude size
- Are there 3rd and 4th tier systems
- Does mandate permit adjustments in electoral districts?

Sunday, February 22, 2004 (AM Plenary Session)

Question period:

A suggestion was made to have a professional photographer take a picture for the record of the Assembly and staff.

Recommendation #3-Revised (“Recommendation”)

The Chair briefly discussed the revised Recommendation. Concern was expressed regarding the exclusivity of Criterion 3. After assurances that the intent was inclusiveness, the Assembly endorsed the revised document. The following Selection Committee members were randomly selected:

- Interior
 - W. Jackson, W. Scholz, A. Rankin
- Lower Mainland
 - D. Beuk, S. Field, E. Krenz
- Island
 - D. Byford, J. Chapman, H. Reimann

Presentation: Mixed Systems—K. Carty

Items raised following the presentation included:

- Why were mixed system abandoned in Alberta and Manitoba
- Impact of a large number of top-up seats
- Can candidates be placed on constituency and party lists
- Demographic information on BC
- Evaluation of MMP models

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups.

Plenary Wrap-Up

The Chair indicated that the selection process had left the southern interior without a representative on the Selection Committee. With the support of the Assembly, J. Stinson was picked to join the Committee.

K. Carty outlined the material to be covered for the next session and the preparatory work for the members.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:20 p.m.